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HENRY A. STIMSON.





THE APOSTLES' CREED

IN THE LIGHT OF

MODERN DISCUSSION

BY

HENRY A. STIMSON

D.D., RIPON; M.A. AND S.T.D., YALE

"And this is the victory that hath overcome the world,
even our faith." I JOHN 5: 4.

BOSTON

The Pilgrim Press

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TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
MANHATTAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH •

MY DEAR PEOPLE, WHOSE KIND AND LOVING AP-
PRECIATION HAS INSPIRED THIS WORK, AND
WHOSE TRUE AFFECTION AND STEAD-
FAST DEVOTION ARE MY DAILY
JOY AND STRENGTH. •

“ To learn what is true, in order to do what is right—this is the summing up of the whole duty of man.”

PROF. HUXLEY.

PREFACE

If, as is more than ever probable, the faith of the first century is to be the faith of the twentieth century, many troubled souls will be immensely comforted. We are witnessing this remarkable phenomenon; the oldest extant Christian Confession that has any completeness is rapidly and widely finding a new acceptance. It is heard to-day in public worship upon more lips than any form of words outside the Bible.

The title, "The Apostles' Creed," need trouble no one. The origin of the Creed is unknown; although it has undergone some slight modifications, it has so simple and compact a unity as to indicate that it was struck out at a single heat. It is a crystallization of the Christian faith, as that faith, passing out of the dry and narrow atmosphere of Jerusalem, came to self-consciousness in the more liberal and cosmopolitan atmosphere of Antioch. It is in this sense the Creed of an apostle, *i. e.*, of a man who has a message because he has something that he believes. It is for the whole Church and for all time because it is triumphant and not defensive; it is conscious of no enemies; it joyfully affirms. We take it upon

our lips with the thought that for nearly two thousand years it has been the answer of believing hearts to the revelation of God.

In studying the Creed I hold with Harnack, that the sources of our knowledge of Christianity in the New Testament are trustworthy and harmonious. I do not believe that there was such a conflict between Paul and the other apostles as has been claimed, but, with Ritschl, I believe that the peculiar character of the history of the post-apostolic church is due rather to a "blunting of Pauline ideas arising from the incapacity of the Gentile mind to follow the great apostle in his experiences and preconceptions." I therefore hold myself free to refer to any part of the New Testament for my sufficient authority.

The Bible is for the Christian the final test. It is a record of the self-revelation of God through a historical process; but it is important to remember that the revelation did not cease when the canon of Scripture closed. God has continued to reveal himself as the deepening and widening life of his people has made it possible for him to unfold the contents of the original revelation; as with the advancing season the buds on a tree open into blossom and fruit. The original revelation was intimately connected with the personal experience and attainments of individual men. With-

out them it could not have been made in that form and at that time. The history of God's people ever since has stood in the same relation to the progressive disclosures. The creeds of the Church are therefore both a history of the Church in its relation to divine truth and a disclosure of the truth as it was known at different stages. Every creed must therefore be reinterpreted for each age. It may not be rewritten, for it is given only to certain epochs to attain to the intensity of spiritual heat which will permit their striking off the expressions which shall both crystallize and illumine the sum of the truth to which they have attained. But each age has its own intellectual outfit to the test of which its inherited truths must be subjected before they will be usable. Shibboleths will disappear, but there is no great harm in that; life will have its way; and there will be a fair field for brotherly love. Only in such times we need to keep in mind Athanasius' remarkable saying, "They seemed to be ignorant of the fact that when we deal with words that require some training to understand them, different people may take them in senses not only different but absolutely opposed to each other." John Calvin declared that so long as the central truths of Christianity are held intact difference of opinion is to be tolerated. Here we have central truths; we ought all to know what they are,

and to do what we can to spread a right understanding of them.

I rejoice to believe that we are all getting nearer to Christ and therefore nearer to one another. In using the ancient creeds and seeking to understand them we need not be thought unbrotherly or divisive; the Church has a common and precious inheritance. I am glad to adopt the words of the Unitarian, Dr. E. H. Sears. In his book "The Heart of Christ," he says: "Those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as the supreme authority and guide, and enter more into his all-revealing mind, are making progress toward the harmonizing truths which he represents. However wide apart they may be at the start their progress is ever on converging lines. Essential truth becomes more and more central and manifest, the non-essential falls away to its subordinate place, and orthodox and unorthodox move alike toward a higher and higher unity. It is not that one sect is making a conquest of the others, but Jesus Christ is making a conquest of us all." There is no reason then to be afraid to know what the Church believes.

The notes, which are largely illustrative, will be found massed at the end of the book. The references are copied out for the benefit of readers who, not having libraries at hand, may like to see the full statements.

H. A. S.

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The earliest Greek and Latin Texts of the Roman Creed are given from Westcott ("The Historic Faith") in the columns on the following page for comparison with the complete form of the Creed which gained general currency in the West after the eighth century.

THE ROMAN CREED

MARCELLUS of Ancyra, c. A.D. 337.

RUFINUS, c. A.D. 390.

PERMINIUS, c. A.D. 750.

πιστεύω
εἰς θεὸν * * παντοκράτορα καὶ
* *

* *

εἰς χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ

τὸν μονογενῆ

τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν

τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου

καὶ * * Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου

τὸν ἐν τῇ Πεντηκὼστὶ Ἰλαρόν * *

σταυρωθέντα

* * καὶ

ταφέντα

* * καὶ

τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστάντα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν

ἀναβάντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ

καθήμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ * * τοῦ Πατρὸς

ὃθεν ἔρχεται

κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.

καὶ

εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα

ἀγίαν ἐκκλησίαν

* *

* *

ἀφ᾽ ἑσθιν ἀμαρτιῶν

σαρκὸς ἀνδοταριῶν

ζῶντων αἰώνων

Credo
in Deum Patrem omnipotentem

* * et

in Christum Jesum unicum

Filium eius

Domini nostri

Qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto

* * ex Maria Virgine

* * crucifixus

sub Pontio Pilato

* * et

sepultus

* * *

Tertia die resurrexit de mortuis

Ascendit in coelos

Sedet ad dextram * * Patris * *

Inde venturus est

Judicare vivos et mortuos;

et

in Spiritum Sanctum

Sanctam Ecclesiam

* *

* *

Remissionem peccatorum

Carnis resurrectionem

Credo

In Deum Patrem omnipotentem

Creatorem coeli et terrae¹; et

in Jesum Christum, Filium

eius unicum

Domini nostri

Qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto

Natus ex Maria Virgine²

Passus sub Pontio Pilato

Crucifixus

Mortuus et

Sepultus²

Descendit ad inferna³

Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis

Ascendit ad coelos

Sedet (-et) ad dextram Dei Patris omnipotentis

Inde venturus est

Judicare vivos et mortuos;

Credo

in Spiritum Sanctum

Sanctam Ecclesiam

Catholicam⁴

Sanctorum communionem⁵

Remissionem peccatorum

Carnis resurrectionem

Vitam aeternam.⁶

1 A clause corresponding to this is found in the creeds of Irenaeus and Tertullian.

2 The full force of these articles is not found (with one doubtful exception in a sermon attributed to Augustine) till the 7th century.

3 This article is given by Rufinus as part of the creed of Aquileia in his time. A corresponding article is found in a (Arian) Creed of the Synod of Sirmium, A.D. 350, and in two others molded on it.

4 This epithet is found in a creed of the Eastern Creeds.

5 This article is found in a creed of the 6th century, but it was not universal till the end of the 8th century.

6 This article was not established in the Creed till about the middle of the 7th century.

“Conviction is not to be labored by the coercion of civil or ecclesiastical punishment, but by the gentle force of persuasion and truth, not by an appeal to the tenets of parties and great men; not by an appeal to the positions of Arminius or Calvin; but by an appeal to the inspired writings. The only way is to examine our sentiments by Scripture; then candidly and benevolently inquire how far we are agreed in reality; to walk together by the same amiable rule, so far as we have attained to think alike; and to forbear real differences in love, where there appears a sincere love of truth, candor and piety; remembering we all have the inalienable right of private judgment in religion; and that liberty of thinking and choosing our religion, liberty of conscience, was the great errand of our pious forefathers in America.”

REV. EZRA STILES. (afterwards President of Yale College): *Sermon before the Convention of Rhode Island, April, 1760.*

I

THE AFFIRMATION OF MAN

“I Believe”

*“Jesus said unto him . . . All things
are possible to him that believeth.”*

MARK 9 : 23

CHAPTER I

THE AFFIRMATION OF MAN

I am aware that the final and only irrefutable argument for the Christian faith is the Christian life. I am aware that the scientific world in its thought is turning back to-day to Aristotle's complete and splendid definition of a perfect life: that it is the sum and satisfaction of all the powers of our nature. I recall Savonarola's saying¹ that what a man does is determined by what he knows; and I do not forget that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." Yet it is necessary that the Church should have logical and well-founded arguments for the support of its faith, and that it should gather up, from time to time, the definite statements of its faith, in an enduring Creed. The whole history of the Church has shown that the confession of faith is vital to the working out of the Christian life; so that from the beginning the confession has been held to be as essential to worship as are praise and prayer and the sacraments.²

With that in view, we come without apology to the

¹ Tanto se ciasenno quanto opera.

² See Note I.

line of thought before us. When we study our faith, we are doing more than making philosophical inquiry. Such study is for the building up of character, for the attaining and sustaining of a mature and established Christian life. The suggestion that we are engaged in a mere strife about words may be answered with Carlyle's wise aphorism, "At all times a man who would do faithfully must believe firmly."

We begin, then, with the first affirmation, "I believe."

In order to understand just the relation in which faith stands to life, we must conduct a few preliminary inquiries:—

In common life there are certain conditions in which not to believe works the same result that positive denial would effect. We have in the night a suspicion of smoke. We refuse to form any opinion about it, and turn to sleep. That postponement is just as fatal, in case the house is on fire, as would be the conviction that it is not. So there are certain great truths that have a strange cogency upon the soul; they are vital, pressing, momentous, and concerning them hesitation or doubt or postponement may be as fatal in its consequences as disbelief. Whether we will or not, we find that we are not easily done with the questions, Is there a God? Is the soul immortal? What is the nature of sin? What is the eternity that awaits us? Is Jesus

Christ indeed the Saviour from sin? Is there a judgment in the world to come?

It was in the hour of his own supreme exaltation on the Mount of Transfiguration, which was also the hour of the humiliation of his disciples by their failure to cast out an evil spirit, and also the hour when the whole want of our common humanity, in its utter helplessness before the consciousness and the consequences of sin, was expressed in the beseeching prayer of the father of the man possessed with the evil spirit, that Jesus uttered the words, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

What, then, is this all-important belief, which has brought such a promise, in such an hour, from Christ to his Church? What is the meaning of that phrase in which we join with all Christians when each Sabbath we say, "I believe"?

In its simplest terms, it is the affirmation of Self.¹

Day by day I have noticed, in the course of an excavation going on near my house, that the men have been erecting a great crane with which to lift the loads of earth and rocks. They have taken pains to fasten the crane and stay it in all directions, until it should be firm and trustworthy. Only then was it ready to have its lifting power tested. So in our life we need not only standing-ground for ourselves, but

¹ See Note 2.

bracing—that we may be able both to stand and to lift. We must get a sure foundation.

Inquiry may well begin with the simplest questions. Are we sure as to the reality of our existence? Can we affirm “I am”? Can we know that we, individually, are existent, with powers and possibilities and a history, apart from all else that is about us? Can we assert, “I am” or “I believe,” with that assurance of anchorage which will enable us, as duty or opportunity calls, to reach out with lifting power upon others? We all face what Tennyson calls

“This main miracle that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world,”

and we must know the significance of the fact and the measure of the power.

A starting-point in philosophy has been found in the affirmation, “I think, therefore I am.” It will serve our purpose. We know that we do think, and that, being what we are, we can project our thought into the future, or turn it backward upon the past, and thus create for ourselves a history; and that this individual history, which constitutes our life, is not only a mirror of things that have been and a prophecy of what is to be, but is the sum of what makes up our souls; our history has entered into ourselves. We are to-day what we are because of the past, because

of the possibilities of the future, because of the sum of the character which makes us each know ourselves as ourself, and not another.¹

In the course of philosophic thinking in these late days there has come about a notable change in regard to the starting-point in the realm of morals. There was a time when everything was made to center in the command of God. When that was held insufficient, ethical obligation was sought in a man's relation to the community—the old Greek doctrine. And very important and wide-reaching philosophies have been built on this altruistic basis, that is, on the duty of men to other men or to the state. But that notion has proved inadequate.² The question arises, "Why should I deny myself for others?" "Where is the obligation to turn aside from one's own pleasure to promote that of other men?" And it is difficult to answer to those who do not believe in God.³ To-day philosophy is turning to simpler terms, and books of ethics are seeking to establish moral relations primarily upon what a man is in himself, rather than upon what he owes to others.⁴

It will be asked, How can that teaching be adopted without exalting selfishness, and so proving destructive of all human progress? We get our answer in the affirmation of the Creed, "I believe;" therefore I

¹ See Note 3.

² Note 4.

³ Note 5.

⁴ Note 6.

am. It is I who believes. I am a self-conscious being. Very well, then, He who made me, made me for a purpose, for all existing things have some object. The God who created me, created me with a plan, as he did when he made a flower. When he made the first rose, he had a conception of what it should be in its final perfection, and he gave the germ to the earth to keep alive. Through the centuries the working together of man's skill with nature has produced, let us say, the "American Beauty;" not the final, perfect rose, but a very advanced form of that perfection, preparatory to and prophetic of that thought which God has in his mind of what a rose may be. The gardener has been successful in cultivating roses, just so far as he has hit upon and followed God's plan for the rose.

So God has made man according to an idea that exists in the divine mind. What, then, for man, is the supreme good? The realizing of the final perfection for which God made him. What, for man, is right? All that helps him to work out that ideal, until he shall attain it. What is wrong? Anything that shall interfere with his attaining that perfection. Whence, then, arises duty to other men? We discover that God has so placed us as men that we cannot work out that supreme conception unless we work with other men. God has set the solitary in families. He has given children to parents and parents to children, hus-

bands to wives and wives to husbands, he has bound race to race and nation to nation, that the world shall join to help each individual to attain to that final affirmation—until he shall say in the presence of his Maker, "I am. Thou didst make me at the beginning; thou didst summon me to be a worker together with thee in the attainment of the ideal in the divine mind for me. Here is the finished work, thy thought attained."¹

So the conception of Aristotle is realized in this broader, Christian truth, when we recognize that God has given us powers, every one of which has its possibility, and which, in their working together, shall produce a satisfaction, a serenity and peace, which shall be the final reward, the final joy of every soul. To quote St. Augustine: "Thou hast made me for Thyself, and my heart cannot rest until it findeth itself in Thee." Here, then, is the significance of the Christian affirmation, "I believe," in which I individually as a Christian may be permitted to affirm that I am;—a creature of God, made according to his thought, having duties in relation to his will, working out the possibilities which he has established in my nature, capable of infinite joys and infinite sorrows, because I am of the divine.

But as we move on in this line of inquiry,

¹ See Note 7.

we find our chief faculty for working out God's plan for us is the will. The famous maxim of Loyola, the Jesuit, was, "In all things be as a dead man." And the discipline he established was to so subject and master the individual will that it should be crushed, as the soldier in the army is trained to have no will but that of his superior. Of the three vows of the Order, poverty, chastity and obedience, that of obedience was made supreme. Of course this surrender of the individual will to the organization, to the will of a leader, has supreme potency in the creation of a machine, in politics or in religion. It creates the mightiest engine known to man. Its sweep of power is merciless. The man is nothing, the organization is everything. But as a conception of service, it has always been felt to be unsatisfactory, and has been fought against continually by many a strong heart. I remember reading a letter of that beautiful young English professor, Clerk Maxwell, in which, earnest Christian as he was, he protested against the teaching that the religion of Christ demands the subduing or enfeebling of the will. "On the contrary," he says, in effect, "the will is myself; it is a gift to me of power. So far from surrendering my will, or subduing it, I believe I am called of God to train my will, to secure to it supreme dominion, but to hold that dominion in the way of right. I am to bring myself at my best to Christ."

When the Christian, in his historic Creed, declares, "I believe," what is this but saying, I can bring my life into the line of God; I have received the power and privilege from him who created me not a beast of the field, but a man. I can make my life what I will. My will is free. God has made me so far like himself; I am his son; and as the Father has the power of choice, so has he given to his son to have this trait of his Father. The affirmation of the Creed is the affirmation of that freedom of the will which makes every man responsible for his own life, and for the final account of himself to his Maker.¹

Faith, then, is simply the answer of the individual will to the truth. I am; I have the power to choose. And now, I believe. That is, I have that understanding of truth to which my will assents, and in relation to which my will finds service. When I say "I believe," I simply summon the whole man that is within me to a certain particular kind of life.

It is easy to illustrate this in daily life. Take the case of a little child. The child stands tottering before a chair by his mother's knee. The thought in his mind is, "I would like to walk," and the question arises, "Can I, or can I not?" He is persuaded to believe that he can. With tottering step, obedient to his will, he makes the attempt. So long as he thinks he

¹ See Note 8.

can walk, he walks. The moment he allows himself to doubt, he falls. Or look at the boy swimming in the stream. Believing he can reach the other shore, he bravely plunges in. So long as he believes he can cross, he swims safely. In the middle of the stream he hesitates, his will falters, some one calls to him from the shore that he is over his depth; he attempts to turn back, and promptly goes under. John Muir, the explorer of the Alaskan glaciers, tells a touching story of the way by which he saved his dog through bringing him at last to believe that he could cross unaided a perilous ice bridge over a crevasse; which at last he did with a rush. That call upon all the powers of our being not only enables us to act, but creates in us new powers. It becomes constructive. We find that what we believe we can do, we are pretty sure to be able to do; what we are in doubt about, is uncertain; and what we think we cannot do, we surely shall fail in. So, in the Christian life faith becomes the important factor. All things are possible to him that believeth; and without faith we can do nothing.¹

When, then, we say, "I believe in God," we mean that we have such knowledge of God, and such experience of God, that our will shall be governed by God; we command ourself in his service; we give ourself to

¹ See Notes 9 and 10,

be his. The Christian, then, is one who has come to that. He has such views of God and duty, of himself and his privilege, that his will is obedient to his view of the truth; he has brought all his powers into allegiance to God.

The confession of the Church means that as a whole it is working together with God to achieve in every man that purpose and plan which God has formed for him. We have recognized that God's purpose for us is our supreme good. Whatever helps us toward that end is for us right; whatever interferes with our attaining that reality is wrong. Every Christian, then, has a plain path of duty before him. Every Christian knows what it is to believe. It is to have that definite understanding which he gains from his own heart, and God's Word, and the experiences of Christians about him, as to what the desire of God for him is; namely, that he be pure in heart, kind and true and tender; that he keep himself continually under discipline, as one in service; that he believe in God's Word, and that God has ever more and larger truth in store for him. In proportion as he is obedient to this faith, his whole life shall be a progress, a bloom, a beauty, until it shall come to its final fruitage. And that fruitage shall be the attainment of God's fulfilled purpose for him.

Now the question arises, How about error? The

old-time maxims were, "Know the truth," and "Avoid error." Are they identical? Far from it. Know the truth means something very different from Avoid error. Avoid error, we easily can do—by doing nothing. Avoid error, we can easily achieve intellectually, by knowing nothing, having no opinions, no conceptions, no purposes. Knowing the truth, on the contrary, is bringing ourselves into allegiance to the Truth. It is surrendering ourselves to the authority of what we know, be it more or less. But is there no error mixed up in truth? Doubtless. Still, we are so constituted, and the truth stands so related to us that we always have the power of seeing the good there is in the truth, and of throwing off evil. Accept, therefore, the authority of the truth you see, and be loyal to it.

Imagine the injunction to a soldier, "Be very careful not to incur any wounds." Who would fight? The command is, "Advance! Charge!" Give yourself in the line in which what you do will count for the cause you represent.

The effort to obey the truth is the first step to attaining larger truth. The purpose to use so much truth as one sees, is the surest guaranty of escaping error. Anselm's great saying becomes true, "I believe in order that I may know," and so does Abelard's reply, "I know in order that I may believe." The

Christian Church has always believed with John Robinson, the Pilgrims' pastor, that there is "much truth yet to break forth out of God's Word." It has also abundantly proved that in proportion to the use of such truth as is revealed to each man have been the growth and blessedness and power of Christian truth in us, and the reality of our service in bringing in the kingdom of Christ in the world.¹

There is a story of a craven who broke his sword in the battle, and flung it away, and fled. The prince came along, wounded, bleeding, weaponless, hard pressed. Seeing the broken sword, he grasped it, and, turning, led his men back to victory.² What is that but a picture of the Christian; the weapon of truth in his hand broken and imperfect, but ever recognizing that it is still a weapon given of God, and that with true faith and strong heart and unwavering allegiance to his Master behind him, it is competent by the grace of God to bring in the day of triumph for his Lord?

Therefore, "I believe" is the pæan of victory of the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the affirmation of a manhood which unwaveringly responds to his life-giving call.

¹ See Note 11.

² Note 12.

II

THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD

“I Believe in God”

“In the beginning God”

GENESIS 1: 1.

CHAPTER II

THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD

I have tried to show how, in the opening affirmation of its Confession of Faith, the Church recognizes the dignity of man; and how the appeal which Christianity makes is the appeal for manliness. It is a return to, and enlargement of, the old conception of character, that the highest ideal is the devotion of all one's powers to a definite duty—Aristotle's splendid conception of the noble life as one in which man's whole being is drawn into the service of what is best.

Now we come to the definite statement of the Christian faith: "I believe in God;" that is, I summon all my powers to a supreme consecration, and I devote them to *God*.

A letter recently received from a missionary in Japan incidentally mentions a conversation which he had just had with a Japanese inquirer. The Japanese at first questioned the propriety of discussing the character of Almighty God, holding that that is too great, too absolute, to be made fundamental in any form of religion. Perhaps also the awakening consciousness of his own sin led him to draw back before the thought

of the unknown, holy God. The result of the conversation was that he changed his position, and admitted that his first impression was mistaken, and that, indeed, if he was to find a faith that would satisfy and save his soul, he must find it through some glowing perception of that Being who seemed too sacred and too remote for his earthly comprehension.¹

Those of us who have passed middle life have lived to see a great change take place in the attitude of unbelievers in our civilized communities toward the idea of God. Up to the close of the first half of this century we were still under the influence of the sharp antagonism between faith and unbelief which was rampant in the preceding century. The doctrine of God as our Creator, Preserver and Ruler was strenuously held and strenuously opposed. Those who did not believe were violent in unbelief. But by the middle of this century the new science arose, a new epoch opened in human thought, and with it came a new view of God. Men were startled with the thought that, after all, creation did not need a Creator; it is only a process, an evolution, perpetually unfolding from within itself. A new geology, a new chemistry, a new astronomy, and, more than all, a new biology, have not only come to possess the thoughts of men in all material knowledge, but have come so to influence

¹ See Note 1.

the view of God that the old antagonism has disappeared; and we now find ourselves surrounded by people who are willing to be entirely indifferent as to any conception of God. You may affirm your faith in God if you will, but it is not necessary to a man's conception of nature or of life; it is not necessary even for solving the problem of the future. This feeling is strengthened by the fact that the Bible has come to be regarded as the product of forces working through long periods, human in method if not in origin, fallible and erroneous. And this remarkable change, perhaps the most remarkable in human thought that the world has known, has unfolded so quietly and yet so rapidly, that men still living and not past middle life have seen the transformation and been hardly conscious of it. It has proved itself not only revolutionary in science, literature and civilization—not only a change in all the processes by which men are seeking to settle social and ethical questions—but it has extended into the relations between the Church and the world. It has done much to break down the old walls of separation; it has dissipated the old antagonisms. And to-day you would find it difficult to discover a single instance of a man or book which expresses its thought in the old, sharp, bitter hostility to Christianity. An occasional voice may be heard reiterating the old sneers, or

striving to arouse the old hatred, but it meets no response, and seems only to emphasize the extent of the change. There are on all sides of us, in our congregations, in our business, in our homes, multitudes of excellent people who are perfectly contented to go on agnostically. They are good neighbors and friends, upright, lovable people, but without God and without compunctions. They are not enemies of God; far from it; they have no care one way or the other. As a consequence, we Christians have ceased to make the strenuous appeal of our fathers, which expressed itself so often in warning of the danger of judgment, which exalted God in his holiness and justice, and saw in him that One before whom every man must appear to give account of the deeds done in the body. So that when we take up the historic creed through which the Church has expressed itself in all time, we find that, while retaining the ancient form of expression, it is sounding to-day in new ears, and in its interpretation has greatly changed.¹

We need, therefore, to come back to the old truths, and ask ourselves, Do they retain not only their truthfulness but their insistence? Are they as strenuous in their requirements, as full of potency in their inspiration and in their warning, as in generations gone by? Is it enough to believe that God is immanent, that is,

¹ See Note 2.

found in all existence; and that we should content ourselves, and others about us content themselves, with the pantheism of the past; which, finding God everywhere, as a matter of fact found him nowhere, or, at least, not much of him anywhere? Shall we return to the faith of the deists, who believed indeed that God created the world, but then left it, as a machinist makes an elaborate piece of mechanism, and passes on to something else? Or shall we hold that the universe is so complete, and so governed by law, that there is no need of God in it at all; that its very completeness has expelled God? Shall we agree with those scientific men who, Ruskin says, "do not believe there is a God, because they have not found him anywhere in a bottle"?

From all this we come back to the Apostles' Creed. The Church still says, as from the first, "I believe in God." And it is asked again, as it has been asked from the beginning, to give evidence of the ground of its belief—to define to the world what it means by this affirmation of its faith.

Now the religion of Jesus Christ has always been and always will be a practical thing—little concerned with speculation, but always concerned with life. Therefore, whether we are dealing with the Ten Commandments or with the Apostles' Creed, we are brought back to the same point of view, the bearing

of our faith upon our life. Christianity enforces a definite moral code.¹ It molds men to a certain definite method of life, and in connection with that definite life, it aims to create and maintain certain definite feelings. There must be not only a steady pulsation of the life that is to be lifted and regulated, *i.e.*, an obedient life, there must be the outgoing of the heart in abiding affection for that life. And the affection is as essential as the life. Therefore there must always be also the ideal of the Christian life, which shall give character to the service, and lead to the perception of the supreme Source from which that ideal rises. That Source is God.

It would be easy to show that this process is analogous to the requirements and processes of our daily life. An architect, for example, is a man whose business is to produce in material form, as houses and stores, the creations of his mind. His profession is practical. But he is not in the best sense an architect unless there is awakened in his heart an affection for his work. And not only that, in order that he may work successfully he must have ideals which are cogent because they spring from the laws of beauty and of use. He must know what the possibilities and limits of his profession are, as determined for him by conditions fixed in the nature of things; so that his

¹ See Note 3.

ideals, his affection and his practical work always go together.

After the same fashion the Christian life is bound up with the Christian's conception of God. We are compelled to go back to the source of both life and feeling, the character of God, who not only has given us, in his word, ideals of life for us to realize, but has realized them himself. We can worship only a God who is himself, in his supremest glory, that which he has set before us as the ideal for the fulfilment and adorning and blessing of our own personal life.¹

So we come to the questions: Who is God? What is he? How do we know that he exists? Philosophy has dealt with these questions from the beginning. It has argued along many different lines, and the work of one generation of thinkers has been often set aside by that of the generation that followed. But is it true that the conception of God is uncertain because arguments change? Because these advance and widen, is the foundation less established? Men are still arguing, for example, over the meaning of the statue of the Venus de Milo. The statue is unchanged. Through all the changes of argument some things remain fixed. The conception of man as a thinking being subjecting all things to the test of whether they be true or false, that does not alter.

¹ See Note 4.

When, seeking to live right lives, conscious of the desire of our hearts for right affections and for realizing the presence of God who made us, and made us for himself, we ask what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong, we are prepared to receive the answer that inevitably comes: "There can be no thought without a thinker:" Descartes' "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" And the very conception of reality is simply a conception of existence as submitted to the test of a supreme judgment. The judgment of man may be mistaken; he may take the false for the true; but we are conscious in all our thinking that the thinking, as well as the facts themselves, are submitted at last to the arbitrament of the eternal Truth.

"Dark, dark, yes, irrecoverably dark
Is the soul's eye; yet how it strives and battles
Through the impenetrable gloom to fix
That master light, the secret truth of things
Which is the body of the Infinite God."¹ . . .

That idea of the absolute Truth, to whom all existence, the thinker himself and all his thoughts, are submitted, is the one enduring conception. It is the thought of the absolute God. Because there is thought, there is a Thinker. Because there is existence, there is a test of reality. And that test of reality is the test of the infinite Mind, who is over all and in all, and to whom at last all is to be brought.

¹ Arthur Hallam.

Arriving at this, our hearts answer to the thought. We find comfort in believing that, however we may misjudge in life, however we may mistake false for true, all is subjected at last to the absolute Truth, to the pure and enduring Thought, which will set things right. The heart responds to the conception that the real involves blessing, that the true involves the final dissipation of the untrue, that the weariness and disappointment of life involve the eventual setting of all aright in the pure light of God himself.¹ So we come to a definite conception of God. Because he has taught us that our life must have in it a purpose, that it must be controlled by love, that it must arrive at a conception of justice and of right; because he has given us the sense of personality in ourselves, so that we think and feel and will; he has precluded our conception of a God who is not himself a person, who is not loving and just, who is not himself present in all the world that he has made.² Because the highest life known to us is the progressive realization of the eternal life by an infinite Spirit, we come to believe that all beauty and all knowledge and all usefulness are in God, the infinite Being who has made us in his own image, has breathed into us his own spirit, and will bring us at last to render an account to himself of what he has given us.

¹ See Note 5.² Notes 6 and 7.

This is the philosophic conception upon which the Confession of Faith rests, the Christian affirmation, "I believe in God." It enables us to say, "This Thinker from whom we know thought, this holy One from whom we know righteousness and good, this infinite Affection from whom we know love, this eternal Personality, unseen, unreachable by man in his searching after God, surely will manifest himself in his own time and in his own way, to his creatures, and indeed has so manifested himself."¹

With this conception, which finds its answer in every human heart—for there has never been a civilization so degraded but there has been this longing after God and this indestructible belief that God was revealing himself in thunder, in lightning, in the strange life of the forest, the sea, the mountain, the waterfall—the Christian turns to the Bible, seeking the facts and details of revelation.

At once a remarkable thing confronts us. Everywhere, whether in barbarism or in civilization, in the wilds of Africa, or in the refined and polished communities of the Greeks, man has always been a seeker after God, if haply he might come to him and find him. But when we open the Bible we are struck with the fact that there is no evidence that these men of the Old Testament were seekers

¹ See Note 8.

after God. On the contrary, they were men under compulsion. They speak as they are moved. They have not sought God that they might have something to say of him, but God has sought them and compelled them to give utterance to the truth which he has revealed. Moses protests against being sent as God's messenger to Pharaoh, or to his own people. He says, "I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Jeremiah pleads that he is but a youth from an unknown village: "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." David says, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?" So always from Noah to Malachi. What is the meaning? Everywhere else gropings after God; and here, all of a sudden, men hastening to tell what they have received from God and what they know about him! They do not always obey; indeed we find them in continual revolt against the revelation they have received; but the revelation is there, the record is true to the facts. The majestic righteousness of the Holy One of Israel stands over against the oppressive sense of man's nothingness. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me." "Thou understandest my thought afar off." "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon

me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" This is the cry.¹

Shall we not come, then, with something of confidence to this old book, with its unique voice, with its solemn, distinctive place in the world's history, if we would know something of the unseen God, and what he is, if he is ever to reveal himself?

We open it. "In the beginning God"— Then follows the story, not simply of what God did, but of what God has shown himself to be. God created. And the very word by which God is described, "Elohim," what does it mean? "The awe-inspiring One." The God before whom all men tremble has manifested himself. God, our Creator! Then follows the long record of the names by which these early men who received the revelation sought to make known to others the God who had spoken to them. He spoke to Moses at the burning bush, and Moses said, "What is thy name?" Fix the revelation in some form such that men may lay hold of it, and that I may carry it as the eternal truth to the people. And God said, "I AM THAT I AM." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." "Jehovah," the living One. And now the He-

¹ See Note 9.

brew scholars tell us that that is not the whole of the meaning of that strange word. It is not the living, but rather "the becoming One"—the One ever advancing, showing ever more and more of himself. God, the awe-inspiring One, he created. He manifested himself progressively to his people, a personal presence, revealing more and more of himself as they were able to receive it.¹ As we go on with the story, we find other names: Adonai, the Almighty; Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts; Jehovah Tzidkenu, the Lord our righteousness; the Holy One of Israel; and so on, until we come to the revelation in which the Alpha and Omega, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, manifests himself as Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, Saviour, Friend.

Now, the answer the Christian gives to those who ask his confession, is, I believe in God; about whom so little can be said, before whom the heart instinctively shrinks in its helplessness, but who through all the ages past has been seeking to manifest himself to his children, and whom the holy men of old, the chosen ones of Israel, were permitted to know as the Creator, Preserver and bountiful Benefactor of all; the personal God of the believer, the Ruler of his chosen people, infinitely tender in his compassions, and the final Judge before whom all shall appear. We

¹ See Notes 10, 11 and 12.

can stand with that poor outcast woman of the Old Testament story, by the spring in the desert, as she called the name of the place Beer-lahai-roi, "The well of the living one who seeth me." That is the Christian's testimony. "I believe in God." Not the Church, not the well, not the flame of fire, not the quaking mount, and not the divided sea, but every place in life is the place of "the God who sees me." That is my confession. That is the source of the ideal and the impulse by which all my nature shall be brought to work out a manly life. That is the confession to which the deepest springs of my heart shall be open in enduring emotion. In him I know my soul shall be satisfied when I shall see him as he is, and shall awake in his likeness. And, for our testimony to the world in its easy indifference, its self-sufficient knowledge of nature, we seem again to be standing on Mount Carmel, at the time of the evening sacrifice, with all the priests of Baal in their pomp and triumph, and the king on their side; and over against them, alone, the prophet of the Lord, with the simple prayer, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Lord, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." And out of the shivering mount, God answered Elijah in the whirlwind and the fire.

III

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE FATHER

“The Father Almighty”

“Our Father which art in heaven”

MATTHEW 6: 9.

CHAPTER III

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE FATHER

In following the Creed to this point we have considered what might be called the philosophic foundations of the Christian faith. Now we come to a simpler and more familiar line of thought.

We have seen that faith is thought kindled by emotion, and concentrated by the will; that it contains a principle of knowledge, a principle of power, and a principle of action. For the Christian faith is something more than an affirmation of the intellect. It is an affirmation of the intellect addressed to our entire nature, summoning us to give all our powers to a definite service. We have advanced from that fundamental conception, to consider the direction in which our service is to be rendered, and the impulse out of which the strength of our life is to come. We have said, "I believe in God." We know something more of God than that he is "a mighty darkness filling the seat of power." We have seen that the thought of God is the final test of reality and the final arbitrament as to the right. We have attained the eternal Presence, the personal, vital source of all life, by whose

judgment all other judgments are to be tried, and before whom, as the supreme consciousness, all purposes and thoughts and desires of men must finally be brought.

Now we pass to that phrase in the ancient creed which brings us to a definite revelation. We turn from the uncertain ground of man's philosophic thinking to the clear, authoritative and enduring statement of the revealed Word of God.

If man had not sinned, God's revelation of himself to men, we can believe, would have been, in ever-enlarging measure, progressive according as man advanced in his capacity of knowing God—a doubly progressive movement, in the coming down of God to man, and in the ascent of man toward God. But with man's fall, that uniform and steadily advancing revelation must necessarily be interfered with. We shall find, as we open the story, that the revelation has been a slow and troubled process, in which at every point man is seen little prepared to receive the knowledge which God is waiting to bestow.

We shall expect to find simplicity in the revelation of the one God making himself known to man; but it will be the simplicity not of a single unfolding, but the simplicity of harmony. Man will be gradually prepared, and the divine nature will appear, now in one manifestation and now in another, according to

the vicissitudes of his condition or the requirements of his training. As the child in the home needs now guidance and now withholding, as his growing spirit reveals itself under the influences amid which he lives, so this revelation will be various. It will often seem to be devious, and even inconsistent with itself. But at any one time it will be possible to look back upon its course, and see that it is a revelation proceeding to one end, and lifting man little by little to a larger, truer knowledge of his God—a knowledge which will be made complete when at last we shall see him as he is.

We discover that the names of God have been always more than a name; each has marked a forward step in the revelation. "Tell me thy name!" was the beseeching prayer of Jacob struggling with the angel; for in that revelation of the name he was aware he would have full knowledge of who his midnight antagonist was. There was a time in the history of Israel when it was said, "By my name Jehovah I was not known to them." The great stages in the development of Israel are marked by three distinct names by which God has thus been revealed in the Old Testament. The old Hebrew name *El Shaddai*, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, was the name by which God was known to the patriarchs—a name suggestive of the richness of God's power in blessing whom he chose, of the solemnity of his worship, of the scope

and certainty of his judgments—a name made known to people committing themselves to him, knowing little more of God than his relations to the individual; the God with whom Enoch walked, “and was not, for God took him;” who gave Noah his ark, and with whom Abraham conversed alone on the hilltops of Judæa.¹

With Moses came a new name, *Jehovah*, the Living One, preeminently the covenant-keeping God, who was leading his people as a flock; the Shepherd, caring for the little ones, bringing them on to spiritual relationships with himself, revealing to their hearts a spiritual indwelling, awakening a keener sense of spiritual power; so that underlying the sacrifices and altars of Israel, lying back of their sacred days, and recognized in their offerings, was this apprehension of a spiritual God. When they erred and fell, they were sharply reminded that this was the meaning of their ceremonies and offerings; God had no pleasure in their sacrifices; he delights not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs; “Wash you, make you clean;” “Cease to do evil: learn to do well;” “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” A broken and contrite spirit, the surrender of the heart to him, the living fact of present and intimate communion with him, a spiritual God, these are the essential things.²

¹ See Notes 1, 2 and 3.

² Notes 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Later came the name "*the Lord God of Sabaoth*," "the Lord of Hosts,"—a widening of thought to understand that he who was the God of their fathers was also Lord of all. It had been foreshadowed in the past. They had a distant, dim, but wide horizon of the blessing to come to them as promised to Abraham, but only in the prophets does this thought take possession of Israel and become characteristic of the new day toward which, after the Exile, they were moving. The Messiah of Israel, the God of Israel, was to be God of all nations. So these three names, God Almighty, Jehovah, and the Lord God of Hosts, were characteristic of these three great stages in the development of revelation and the development of God's people—steps not sharply divided in time, but marking the lines of growth.¹

The name Our Father, as applied to God, does not appear in the Old Testament except in a poetic sense—"A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows"—until it appears in the prophets. With them it is understood as applying to days yet unrevealed, as when Isaiah speaks of the "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace;" or says, "Thou art our father, though Abraham knoweth us not." "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father," sings the Psalmist, "my God, and the rock of my salvation."

¹ See Notes 8, 9 and 10.

These few incidental passages show how strange was the name on the lips of Israel. It never occurs as a personal term. God might be in a large sense, some sense yet to be revealed, the Father of the nation, but not "Our Father," as he is in the New Testament.¹

The life of the Israelites, instead of being a life of steady development in knowledge of God, seems to have been a long course of fallings away from the truth they knew. The patriarchs heard God's voice, and went up, not knowing whither they went, because God was leading them. We find individuals called to definite service, to which they promptly surrendered themselves, as Samson and Gideon and Deborah, or men consecrated to God in their youth, as Samuel. But as the patriarchs and judges gave place to the kings, and the Israelites, through their intercourse, particularly with their neighbors the Phoenicians, acquired wealth and luxury, the service of God lost its hold upon them, and their life assimilated to that of the heathen. Their sacrifices and public worship continued, but expired so far as appropriation of the personal God is concerned; they had lost their meaning.

This went on until the Captivity, when their separation from God was so complete that God plunged them

¹ See Note II.

into the deep waters of the Exile, and the oppression of the heathen, to restore them to himself. In time they came back to spend their strength in learning the lesson of the past. They organized schools, taking to themselves the literature of Greece and the other nations, so widening their intellectual horizon. They became traders and travelers in all lands, as well as voluminous authors, putting forth new powers, like new blades upon an old stalk, and preparing the way for the moving of the Jewish mind upon the world at large, in the era of the New Testament and the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ with the announcement of the new name which he was to commit to his people for all time to come—the revelation of the Father.

When we open the New Testament, we find at once, and abundantly, the affirmation of "Our Father." It is an affirmation on Jesus' part of personal service; that he came not to do his own will but the will of the Father that sent him. It is his announcement to the despairing woman at the well that God is a spirit, to be worshiped in spirit and in truth—one who has revealed himself to the outcast, and who will dwell in the heart of the woman. He says, "I am come in my Father's name." "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." He is the revelation of the Father. The Sermon on the Mount—his most characteristic teaching—turns upon the thought of the Father. We are

to glorify our Father by our good works, by the spirit we are of, by our prayers and our gifts. As we do the will of our Father, we are accepted; we are to aim at being the children of the Father; we are to receive our reward at his hands, and "blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing," that is, doing the will of his Father. His prayer was, "Father, glorify thy name." And there came a voice out of heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." When at the close he looks back upon his work, he prays, "Father I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." And when the disciples say, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," as if they then gathered up all the questioning they had had in their minds from the beginning,—“We have heard the word from thy lips again and again; it is so familiar that we ask a fuller explanation. ‘Your Father, our Father!’ We are more and more convinced that we do not understand that word as you use it. Show us the Father from whom you come, whose name you are calling, to whom you are going, to whom you say we also shall go—show us this Father, and it sufficeth us;” then came the solemn answer, “Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”¹

¹ See Note 12.

The revelation, then, of the Father is to be sought in the Son. In the times of the Old Testament men could not have understood it. That men should be children of the Father was unintelligible even to the chosen people, till they looked in the face of the Son of God. In that new revelation of divine love, of divine holiness, of the beauty of the divine person in Jesus Christ, they knew what sonship was, and the mists fell away. That they might know the Father! In the subsequent centuries, only as men have come to know the Son have they known the Father. Not through the doctrinal affirmations of the Trinity in the creeds, but through the personal surrender of the life to Jesus Christ, men have been led, each for himself, step by step, into that fellowship with God, that conviction of his sufficiency for the needs of the sinner, his ability to bless as a father blesses the life of his children, in which the Church has learned to say, as it could not have said before, "I believe in the Father." Fatherhood, in short, can only be known through this divine Sonship and the consequent Brotherhood.¹

Scientists may teach us that in biology the life of the race, the genus, the species, is continually shadowed forth in the individual specimen. As they study the form and history of the animal in its successive

¹ See Note 13.

stages, they can unfold the history of the stock to which the animal belongs. The same is true of man, in perhaps a larger and truer sense, in the life of the spirit. In our infancy we believe in God. We hear his voice, we feel his presence. As a child looks at the stars, as thoughts come to him upon his bed, God is not far off. He asks of God, and God hears and answers. He makes covenants with God and they are kept. It is easy to believe that all that is about him and within him is of God. The years quickly come when the child passes into youth, and the training of the mind supplements the feelings of the heart. And still the life of the growing child is readily yielded to the service and love of his God and Father. Obedience to law, and recognition of daily duty, help him to something of stalwart allegiance. Soon manhood arrives, with its rushing temptations, with its battle with foes without and passions within, its falling away from the simple faith of childhood, the quiet, receptive confidence in all it has been taught, which has been the stay and strength of the early years. Then comes the conflicting sense of loneliness, of separation from everything that once was held and believed, and, worst of all, separation from God. And the man feels, as Israel did, carried far away from his own past, away from all his fathers believed and he himself has known. Then often comes a period of

bitterness, if not of despair; the past outgrown; a faith like that of the heathen, a cry after an unknown God, uttered in the darkness. Then silence; or the abnegation of thought and the abandoning of manhood in seeking an infallible church and committing all to the care of a priest. Well if after this there is the dawn of a new day, the revelation of the Father, made to us personally, in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Elder Brother, the Saviour, the Friend.

It comes to each one in his own way; sometimes in church, from a message of the Scripture, some familiar text gaining a new force as God's arrow; sometimes through sickness or some experience in business or daily life; sometimes in the very emptiness of one's own heart. God chooses a thousand ways. But out of all he chooses that revelation of himself which shall pierce the darkness that envelops his child. As to Israel, when her sacrifices were meaningless, when her inner life was torn in fruitless struggles between her proper leaders, and when men said with scorn that the Messiah had come already and sat as a beggar at the gates of Jerusalem, and no man knew him; suddenly the morning stars sing together, the voices of angels are heard proclaiming the new birth—the strange, sweet voice of the Father speaking to his child. In that announcement comes not only knowledge of the Father, but back of it and as a medium

for it, the knowledge of the Son. Then the day is near when the prodigal comes to himself and thinks of his Father's house; the sinner learns of Him who gave his life for the world; the hard heart begins to melt before the story of Jesus, and the man who was without God and without hope in the world (all the more because he had once had a Christian home or a Christian faith) turns back murmuring that he is not worthy to be called a son, and pleading that he may be as one of the hired servants. With that new knowledge of the Saviour dawns the new and true knowledge of his Father and our Father.¹

Like that experience in the new birth was the experience of Israel. We understand the pitifulness of the Saviour's cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children . . . and ye would not!" He wept over the city, and then gave himself for it. And out of that giving of Himself has the Israel not after the flesh found her redemption and knowledge of her God. So many another wanderer will yet find his redemption, and be brought, as many have been, to his Father's house, by the revelation of the Elder Brother, in whom we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord.

¹ See Note 14.

“Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our feverish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
 In deeper reverence, praise.

Drop thy still dews of quietness
 Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
 The beauty of thy peace.”



IV

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE CREATOR

“Maker of Heaven and Earth”

*“O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
The earth is full of thy riches.”*

PSALM 104: 24.

CHAPTER IV

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE CREATOR

It would be possible for us to engage in a philosophical discussion of the Primal Cause of all things, and to show, on the common ground of metaphysics and philosophy, that creation requires a Creator. It would be possible to open the Word of God, and learn there in how many forms this truth of God as the Creator is confirmed. What we need most of all is a constant impression, wherever we are, by night or by day, and whatever we are doing, in which all nature shall speak to us of God, and the voice of the morning stars, that sang together at the beginning, and has been heard as the harmony of creation ever since, shall sound in our souls, and be to us a constant summons to know him who made us for himself.¹

Therefore let us take our stand on the seashore of a summer night. We are looking out upon the darkening expanse of the ocean, when suddenly the darkness is broken by the rising of the summer moon, and we hear its challenge—the old challenge of the sailing moon, summoning men to gaze into the starry

¹ See Notes 1, 2 and 3.

heaven above our heads, to fathom its mystery, to interpret its message, if we can.

As our gaze follows the moon, we know that we see but one side of her; as if to show us at once, like a dancing coquette, how easily she will baffle our attempt to grasp her secret. We see the dark shadows upon her face, and the astronomer tells us of vast abysses and lofty mountains, as marking an old and worn-out world—a mystery, a secret of God, assailing us incessantly.

We turn from the moon to the stars. One's eye is caught by the ruddy glow of Mars, with its fascinating tale. We know how near it is to the sun, and we think of the burning heat, that would render all life, as life is known to us, an impossibility, and the planet a glowing cinder. And again the astronomer announces that Mars has an atmosphere and changing seasons, and ground covered with snow which forms in winter and melts away in the summer's sun, and great, perennial bodies of water, seas and lakes and streams that rise and fall, and what seems nothing less than a system of artificial canals. Man is so far unable to solve the riddle that there has been a standing prize, left as a legacy in France, to any one who should fathom its secret and establish communication with the planet. How completely we are baffled! It is a paradox in the heavens.¹

¹ See Note 4.

We look away to Saturn, with its belts, an unfinished world, carrying us back to creation in the early stages. We have a sample. We think we shall see the process. We begin to get a conception of the vastness and the majesty of the work of God in preparing the earth for man. And there we are stopped. We listen to the tale of Uranus and Neptune. We read of the professor in England, Adams, and the one in France, Leverrier, studying the irregularity in the orbit of Uranus, and reaching the conclusion that to account for the aberration there must be the attraction of another planet not yet discovered. Almost simultaneously they reach their conclusion. They ask the royal astronomer in Russia, Struve, to turn his great Pulkova telescope upon an indicated spot in the heavens at the designated time; and there, sure enough, is the planet Neptune. But they triumph only to learn later that that is not the planet they are seeking. In its place they have found another undreamed-of planet, accomplishing the same results, but far more eloquent of the cornucopia of God, that vast, unknown creative productiveness, out of which the earth, the moon, the planets, our sun, and all that are beyond have come, to tell us nothing except again our own ignorance; drawing anew for us, far in the heaven, the line that marks the bounds of man's knowledge, and declaring how incompetent man is

to solve the problem of existence, or to account for the beginning of things. All the time we are conscious that we have been standing under the starry sky, the floor of heaven, "thick inlaid with patines of bright gold," its myriad constellations of fixed stars, which also have their message for us. And what do we know of them?¹

But here comes the physicist, with the message brought to him by the light, as newly read in our own times. Light travels 186,000 miles a second. It has been hurrying to us, he says, from some of these stars since the dawn of creation, and has not yet reached our earth. Across these vast spaces it is speeding through what seems to be an empty void, and we have no conception as to how nothingness can be traversed. He goes on to tell us that light is pulsating vibrations. He divides a beam into prismatic rays with four hundred million million of vibrations a second at the red end of the spectrum, and seven hundred million million at the violet end. The very air we breathe is pulsating eight billion times a second. We catch our breath and blink our eyes and wonder how we live. Color is simply differing wavelengths; and the realm of light embraces heat, electricity, magnetism, and we know not what.

Then the astronomer proceeds to tell us of what

¹ See Note 5.

these distant stars are composed. He weighs and measures stars that are not seen and never can be seen, whose orbits he determines to be revolutions around another star; whose motions he records as well when they are coming toward us as when going from us. Then he analyzes their light, and proves that the constituents out of which this earth is made are the constituents that compose the stars.

And this universe, the more it opens before us, the more wonderful is its unity—the same eternal gravitation, the same mighty revolutions, everywhere the same unchanging forces; and all, without exception, composed of identical molecules. We speak of the development of the earth; we look at the changing species in the world about us; we read the record of the rocks; and we think that the force of nature has perhaps produced these developments, leading to things yet to be produced by nature; and suddenly the scientific man tells us that back of the changes we call evolution is the ever-present molecule, the basis of all material existence. And that never changes. In nature, weight and measure no molecule has altered. What each is, it always has been. A molecule of hydrogen on earth is the same as a molecule of hydrogen in the farthest star—bearing everywhere the stamp of being, as Sir John Herschel said, a manufactured product, made and placed subject to

forces that come from without, giving it its tremendous potency, the initial energy of all existence.¹

As we stand with upturned gaze, how conscious we become of our littleness! Our eye, in one-tenth of a second, can see all it is capable of seeing in the sky. The photographer's plate takes the place of the eye, and where we see a hundred stars the photographer makes us see five thousand. What a universe it is! What a revelation this of creation! How little we know; how less than little we are!

And then, in our weariness and weakness, we turn from the sky to the earth at our feet. We look upon the swelling vastness of the ocean by whose shores we stand, and Isaac Newton's words come to mind: "I have been as a little child, playing with the shells on the seashore, while the ocean of truth lies unexplored before me." It is the ocean with depths that plummet has not sounded—areas in which Mont Blanc would not lift its towering head above the surface. Dark, below a thousand fathoms, dark and cold and vast. It was supposed to be uninhabited, but now we are told of its abounding life, of living creatures enduring on every square inch of their surface a pressure of a ton for every thousand fathoms of water under which they swim, a pressure equal to the impact of a locomotive with a train of cars behind it—eighty

¹ See Notes 6, 7 and 8.

or ninety tons upon each square foot!—beings that are killed by simply being removed to a higher level. The deep-sea dredge has brought up no trace of man, no least relic, no hint that man has ever sailed the sea, no single suggestion that men ever lived, but everywhere star-dust, the silently gathering waste of the heavens; the ocean, out of its vastness, joining in the voice of the starry world to tell us that He who leads forth Mazzaroth, the signs of the zodiac, in their season, who binds the cluster of the Pleiades in their dancing circle, and guides the Bear with its train, has assigned to the sea its bounds, and given to it its unfathomed mystery and its mighty eloquence as it speaks of God as Maker of all.

We turn to look at the sleeping earth. Night is in the heavens; night is on the waters; and behold, night is on the land. The wild roses have closed their petals. Pea and gentian and oxalis and many another flower have done the same. They have ended their labor with the setting sun, and have sunk into the arms of sleep. The leaves of many trees change their position. They turn edgewise, or fold together, or draw up around their stems. If you try to move them, they resist; if you succeed in the endeavor, you destroy their life. The vegetable world surrenders to the night. It witnesses to law. It is a part of the one universe. As you come to in-

investigate its sleep more carefully, you find that animal life has living relations to it. The night moth has come out to find the flowers awaiting its fruitful visit; and you are led into all that world of which the flower is the wonderful revealer. Mystery beyond mystery! Prehistoric botanists, bound up with the life of the flower, giving their life for it, as it gives its life for them! For we learn from the geologists that plants at first were all independent of any help from living creatures. There were no moths or butterflies in the early world. But there came a time when the air was filled with bloom. With the pollen-bearing plants came the moths and butterflies that fertilize them. And so true has been the service of the moths, that the botanist is guided in his discoveries of the relation of plants to one another by the moths that feed upon them. For each species of moth feeds upon but one genus of plant. And plants as remote from one another as mustard from cabbage, or clover from bean, or nettle from elm, are proved identical in genus, by the habits of the moth that feeds upon them, and upon no other. So all vegetable life is linked together and sustained by the life of the living world that floats above it. And we are led on into the animal world of which we are a part, where again appears a fulness of life and a wealth of thoughtful provision that carries us back to the Infinite.¹

¹ See Note 9. .

The workman sinks his dynamite into the rock and blasts the ledge. Soon the broken rock is overrun with new species of plants. The railroad engineers come along and cut through a bank, and on the exposed slope the botanist quickly finds his profitable field of exploration. The upturned earth proves itself full of rare seeds, awaiting their opportunity. Every farmer knows how valuable clover is as a fertilizer, and we see him plowing in his unharvested crop. But the scientific man has just come to tell him that it is fertile because every rootlet of the clover is covered with minute living organisms that create the nitrogenous product which when plowed back into the soil furnishes material for the oats or corn that are to grow there. We are startled to learn that there is more life hidden beneath the surface of the soil than appears above it. Air and earth are found to teem with living germs, noxious often to higher life when improperly adjusted, but more often found essential when understood,—a witness that God is everywhere.

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God!
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.”

So we come to man himself,—an animal, but so much more than an animal; living on the earth and

coming from it, but only an ephemera, a creature of a day, in his existence,—with his poetry and his history, his records and his promises. The story of the unfolding of the race has its counterpart in the story of the unfolding of each individual; the growth of his passions, the development of his thoughts, the interpretation of his longings, the creation and establishing of his character.

What, then, is the ground for a Christian's faith in the Maker of all? The story that everything has to tell of itself. Every least seed is eloquent with thought to him that can interpret it. Every distant star twinkles with its divine message to the soul that is open to receive it. Every human history has been a record of man's doings in relation to the plan of God for him, and, to him that can read the divine plan, is prophetic of what God would have man do in the generations yet to come.¹

Look at the sun setting over the city. Above the weariness and pain, the confusion and the sin, have you not there the golden flower of another world? Was the apostle's vision on the Ægean isle only the vivid play of a kindled imagination? Is this life all of life? Did nature call herself into being? Are we clods of the dust? and are those soul-stirring thoughts, and the expectations they awaken, given only to deceive? How can we believe it?

¹ See Notes 10, 11 and 12.

"When I remember that the starry sky
Was once but dusky darkness; that the air
Can take such glory and such majesty
From smoky fragments and the sun's fierce glare,
And vapors cold drawn from the far salt seas;—
If out of shapeless matter, void and bare,
And rude, oblivious atoms, Time can raise
The splendid planet; if the formless air,
Earth's barren clods, decay and wrecks of death,
Can wear the bloom of summer, can put on
Man's strength and beauty, surely this strange world
hath
Some certainty; some meaning will be won
Out of the stubborn silence, and our blind
And baffled thoughts some sure repose will find."

Sun and cloud and twinkling star, sea and rock and
humblest weed, are there to speak a word of God. We
feel the truth of the saying, "The truth of nature is a
part of the truth of God. To him who does not
search it out, darkness; to him who does, infinity."
Everywhere is

. . . "a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Everywhere is the sense sublime of God. And in our
aspiration to that Something beyond, dwelling in
the light of the setting sun, we are conscious that we

are lifted above the matter beneath our feet. We, because we have the living soul, and are not animal, hear that voice. As the discovery of his third law broke in upon Kepler's mind on March 8th, 1618, he exclaimed, "God has passed before me in the grandeur of his ways! Glorify him, ye stars, in your ineffable language, and thou, my soul, praise him!" And Isaac Newton exclaimed at his own discovery, "Glory to God, who has permitted me to catch a glimpse of the skirts of his garments. My calculations have encountered the march of the stars."

We believe that He who made the universe made us for himself; and any man who does not hear his voice and do his will and answer to his love, is but a perverted existence. He is cast out by the very force of his life, into that awful solitude which must needs be outside of the obedient universe whose nature is to sing his praises, and which in all the extent of existence knows no possibility of disregarding his call.¹

¹ See Note 13.

V

THE

AFFIRMATION OF THE SON OF GOD

**“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son,
our Lord.”**

“Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

MATTHEW 16: 13-16.

CHAPTER V

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE SON OF GOD

We are in a very different scene from that in which we were in the last chapter. There, following the lead of the Church's Confession, we found ourselves standing on the seashore, looking up at the sky, and about us God's wonderful works in creation. We sought to listen to the psalm of the created universe, recognizing in nature's wonders and mysteries the ever-present testimony to its Maker. We expressed our belief in God, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Here it is not the voice of nature, but the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ himself that calls us to know, not his works, or his teaching, or his sacrifice, but himself; to ask our hearts the question which the Saviour put to his disciples, "Who say ye that I am?" Matthew says it was at Cæsarea Philippi that this searching question was asked. It was just before Jesus' transfiguration, and after the turning away of his disciples, following upon the miracle of the loaves and fishes, because he would not consent to receive their plaudits of royalty. In a scene of rare beauty, on the southern slope of the noble Mount Hermon, about an ancient

grotto, a place once sacred to the heathen god Pan, an early pagan settlement had gathered. Herod had adorned the spot with a temple of white marble, and called it after the emperor. Later, Philip had enlarged the temple and given it his own name, Cæsarea Philippi. It was one of those mixed Gentile-Judæan communities, of which there were many on the skirts of northern Galilee. On this beautiful spot, with, on the one hand, the great world of heathenism pressing up against him, with all its unanswered cry after an interpretation of the riddle of life, and its yearning for a knowledge of the living God; and on the other side, Israel, alone in her possession of the oracles of God, alone in the extent of her humiliation, which others could not understand, because her exaltation had been so peculiarly her own; alone in her possession of prophecies yet unfulfilled and uninterpreted; alone in the promise of a Messiah, whom she did not receive;—standing between the two, mocked in his poverty, despised and rejected alike by both, bearing in his heart the world's sin and the world's need, Jesus asked: "Who do men say that I am?" Sweeping aside their historic testimony, we hear him pressing upon his disciples the personal question, "But who am I to you?"

Whatever force the question had then, it has now much more. The disciples knew comparatively little

of the Lord. The resurrection had not occurred; they had not yet had the revelation of the Holy Ghost in their own hearts, or seen the witness to the living Christ on the day of Pentecost, or had the testimony of martyrs, as we have. That is all behind us; it all lay before them; and it conspires to make it a very personal question to every man and woman to-day, when the world is asking, "Who do you say that he is?"¹

A Christianity without Christ is no Christianity; and a Christ not divine is no Christ, or, at most, is a Christ far different from the one in whom the Church has wrought out her salvation and to whom she has witnessed her good confession.

So the essential matter is, not what may be said of Jesus Christ as a historic person, but what answer we can give to these questions: Is he to me a living Christ, a Saviour from sin and weakness, a daily power in my life? Can I approach him, love him, continue with him always? Has he opened the kingdom of heaven to me? Is my faith in him, as the Messiah, one on which I am willing to stake not only the future but the present? For the basis of our answer we must turn to the Word of God itself.

The earliest written testimony that we have concerning Jesus is that of Paul. Each New Testament author

¹ See Note 1.

speaks from the standpoint of his own characteristics and circumstances. Their testimony agrees, but it has the advantage of individual utterance, and of the unity that lies in diversity. Paul's testimony is peculiarly his own, and it is abundant. In Romans he speaks of "Jesus Christ our Lord," who was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." In the letter to the Ephesians he says, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He heaps up words to show how complete is the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. In Philippians he says, "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And once more, in Colossians, "Giving thanks unto the Father . . . who delivered us out of the power of darkness,

and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell." There is much more to the same effect in all the epistles of the great apostle.¹

But while we find the essential truth concerning Jesus, and something of his message as well, set forth in Paul's epistles, we have also the story of the life of Jesus as given in the gospels, and the Church is accustomed to look to that for details. We will turn only to the testimony of John. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. After Paul had given his testimony, and Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their narratives, at the close of the century it was permitted to John (probably the last survivor of the little

¹ See Note 2.

company that followed Jesus) to write his personal testimony to the life and nature of the Lord whom he so dearly loved.

How singularly John's gospel begins, with that mysterious and seemingly dogmatic theological preface: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"—a preface quite distinct from the simple narrative in which John goes on to tell how the faith of Jesus was revealed to himself and to the other disciples until they became established in it. At the time when John writes, this preface had evidently come to sum up the settled faith of the Church concerning Jesus Christ. John uses the characteristic term as evidently well understood, and requiring no explanation. If the Gospel is held to be written by the "Presbyter John," as is far from proved, the argument still stands. Therefore we ask, where does the phrase come from?

In the Old Testament we have the term used as in Psalm xxxiii, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made," and in Psalm cxlvii, "He sendeth out his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly;" and in the prophets, where the Word is personified, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." As we study the Jewish literature of the time of Christ, we know that the term *Word* had come into common

use as indicating the divine activity,—just as *Wisdom* was used to personify the divine attributes. The Jews came into close contact with the later Greek philosophy, particularly in Alexandria, and the same word appears in the Alexandrine philosophy as the metaphysical term for the thought and power of the absolute God—the God back of the gods—a conception never altogether absent from the Greek mind. And now John, with his message for the world, in order to convey the thought of Jesus' divinity and preexistence to the minds of the Greek-speaking people in whose tongue he is writing, takes the word familiar to the lips of their teachers, and says, "You are not unacquainted with speculations about the means by which the unseen God reveals himself, and the intermediate agents he employs. The God whom you do not know, and whom in weakness you are feeling after, I would declare to you. The Word, the conception of God himself, back of all your mythology, and back of all your worship, back even of the revelation to Israel, is Jesus Christ. He is the Word who was 'in the beginning.' 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The language has its own suggestiveness. It is as if he would say, 'He of whom I would speak was in the unfolding of God through all creation, and was God.'" John ordinarily uses the word for God with the article—the

God. Here he omits it. The Word was not the God, the Father, he was God. The essential nature of God was his. It may be intended that here, as it were on the threshold of the New Testament's revelation of Christ, we should find the underlying conception of God in the plurality of the divine nature, as it is suggested in the opening sentence of the Old Testament: "In the beginning God,"—Elohim, a plural term, God in the plenitude of his being,—"created the heaven and the earth." In the beginning the Word was with the Father, and was God. And by him and through him all things consist. John affirms the persistence of the Word, the oneness of his essential nature with the Father, and his incarnation as a temporal dwelling in humanity as in a tenement.¹

But John quickly discharges from his mind this term; as if he said, "I cannot even give through your thought and your speculations the message I have for you. I see it as a prophecy. Now follow me while I unfold to you the story of who Jesus was, and what he told us of himself. For we have his own testimony; and because we have experience of the life from God, we believe." He goes on, "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, glory as of

¹ See Notes 3 and 4.

the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." Then he proceeds to tell how he first met Jesus, and what the beginning of his miracles was, and the details of his conversation with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well, and with the man at the pool of Bethesda; how Jesus opened the mysteries of his divine nature, of his having been before Abraham was, how he is and always has been one with the Father, into whose divine life he is to bring those who shall walk with him.

From beginning to end, the gospel of John unfolds out of the personal revelation that had come to him from the Lord himself. It is the story of his own knowledge of Jesus Christ. He closes his record with these significant words: "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and"—to emphasize the fulness of the meaning of the term,—“that believing ye may have life”—to give which is the attribute of God alone—“that believing ye may have life in his name.”

He refers to the dealings of God with the world, to show that they are revelations of God's nature. "If God so loved the world," John hastens to say, "it is because God is love. If God enlightened the world, it is because God is light. What God is, he has shown us in his Son Jesus Christ." It is not the miracles of Christ, nor the example of Christ, nor the

works of Christ, that have brought salvation to a dying world and revealed God; but it is Jesus Christ himself. It is in the adoration of his person, in the surrender of the heart to his love, in the giving up of the life to his life, that we are to find our life.¹

So much, then, for the testimony of the New Testament as to the person of Christ as distinct from his sacrifice. Now as to the historic question: What has the Church believed concerning Jesus Christ?

At the first the Church was made up largely of men who had been with Jesus, or were taught by those who had known him. They were content with telling the story of Christ, and the Church they established was largely content with the personal possession of the living and ever-present Christ. Their doctrine of the resurrection was the chief public grievance, and brought some of the believers at once to the test of martyrdom. As persecution developed, the martyrs everywhere gave testimony to their faith in Christ their Lord, whose presence with them they declared, as Stephen did when he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

But with the opening of the next century, and for many years after, controversy waged about the person of Christ. At first the crucial question was as to his humanity. There were those who recognized that

¹ See Notes 5 and 6.

Christ was a living force in the world, but they denied the substantiality of his bodily presence. They said, "There have been other forces that have murmured in the voices enshrined in the temple. God has often spoken to men." So the Church found itself obliged to deal with the historical details of the life of Jesus. They delighted to tell how he was born of Mary, and was brought up by a village carpenter,—with the full story of his manhood, of his hungering and thirsting, his walking with the disciples by the way, his doing and living as any man might do. Whether the world accepted it or not, the Church stood firm upon his humanity.

Then came the question whether he was really a man in the possession of a human soul, or was he merely a divine spirit taking possession of a human body and using it—as a body might be possessed by a supernatural spirit. The Church replied by devoting all its strength to establishing the true manhood of Christ in the possession of a complete humanity. He was tempted as we are tempted. He wept with those that wept. He was moved with compassion beside the bier that carried the son of the widow of Nain. He sobbed in the sorrow of the little household of Bethany that he greatly loved. The testimony of the Church was that that Jesus who walked in human form had a heart and spirit and soul as every man has. He was truly man.

Then, in a last attack, the philosophers admitted that he had a human body and a human soul, but urged that he had a divine will. The Church insisted that no limitation could be made; Jesus had a human will as well; and his sacrifice, in yielding himself to the will of his Father, was a sacrifice human in the entire extent. It was in the fact that, being made in the likeness of man, in human form, with a human soul, and working out a human character, as every man does, by resistance of the will to temptation, tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, he gave himself a deliberate and voluntary offering, that he became a sacrifice for us and for the race.¹

Then the controversy shifted to the question of his true divinity. It was admitted that Jesus had a true humanity. He was Son of man. But is it true that he was the Son of God? The Church had successfully maintained the doctrine of the divine unity and the reality of the divine Incarnation. It had not advanced to the successful harmonizing of these primal truths. The attack of the Arians was at this point. They said, God alone is eternal; all other existence, including the Son, must have been created by an act of the divine will. The Son may be unique; he is the Image, the Word, Wisdom, but he is not God.

Then the Church stood for its life. The Arian

¹ See Note 7.

heresy popularized unbelief. It had won the leading men of the world. It had its adherents in great bishoprics, in which this intellectual aspect of the nature of Christ was presented as sufficient to meet the world's need. Until at last came the Council of Nicæa, in the year 325. The issue at stake was not of any particular form of philosophy, but of Christianity itself. The discussion turned on single words, and on single letters in a word, but men contended for their Lord. The majority had been swept into the current of what would be called the liberal teaching, but the Church reaffirmed the historic faith, in the formal utterances of the Nicene Creed, "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father; Light of light; very God of very God; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down, and was incarnate, and was made man."¹

Yet for many years the Arian faith continued in a large part of Christendom. For several centuries its hold upon the Goths and the Vandals kept the Church in the throes of the controversy. But for fourteen hundred years the Church's unvarying testimony to the divinity of its Lord has remained unchanged. The awakening mind of the thirteenth century questioned many things, but did not impeach it. The

¹ See Notes 8 and 9.

scientific revolution which, as Mr. Gladstone has said, opened to us the antipodes and the solar system, did not shake it. The Renaissance, which, in bringing to light the literature of the past, laid new foundations for all literature, did not touch it. It seemed as if the confession of its faith in Jesus Christ was fixed as far above the perils that threatened the Church, as the sky is above the mists which cover the earth. Even the reformers, who in all ages are reshaping the Church and reestablishing the foundations upon which salvation shall rest, added nothing and altered nothing in the testimony the Church has given to its belief in Jesus Christ the Son of God, its Lord, its Redeemer, its King. It stands, as he does, the same yesterday and to-day and forever.¹

We come now to the closing question. It is as if again we heard Jesus sweeping aside the testimony of the disciples, of the Church, and of the world, and saying: "But, beloved, who do you say that I am?" It is a searching question. That beautiful spirit, that far-famed, tender-hearted man, Dr. William E. Channing, said: "To know Jesus Christ is to approach his soul, to comprehend his spirit, to see how he thought and felt and purposed and loved." And the word is eternally true—but it is not the whole truth. It is not the testimony of the Church. To know Jesus

¹ See Note 10.

Christ is to approach his soul, to comprehend his spirit, to see how he felt and thought and purposed and loved—but far more is it to know him who purposes and loves and grieves; to hear his voice who says, “Come unto me and live;” to know him, not simply as the Jesus who on the hills of Galilee and in the streets of Jerusalem testified to a loving God and Maker of all—but to see him in the awful sacrifice on Calvary, to know that he gave himself for us. It is to behold him now as the risen and living Christ, our Saviour and our Friend, comforting, pardoning, sustaining; as he hears our prayers, as he leads his children by the hand in their daily service, as he presses home upon them his assurance of the divine grace and a present pardon, and as he opens to us the vision of a heavenly home where he stands to welcome us to himself.

In confirmation of the faith of the Church comes the testimony of her saints through the centuries, certifying to the loving and abiding presence with them of that Jesus in whom they believed. “Eighty and six years have I served him,” said the aged Polycarp, in the arena. “How can I blaspheme the name of my King and my Lord?” So bishops and presbyters, philosophers and soldiers, young men of beauty, and scholars of high cultivation, widows and maidens, slaves and shepherd boys, in the amphitheater and on

the rack, cried to the present Christ, and laid down their lives for him.

"Whom dost thou worship?" said the consul to Pionius writhing on the rack. "I worship Him who made the earth and stars, and gave me life, and is my God." "Dost thou mean him who was crucified?" "Certainly I do, Him whom the Father sent for the salvation of the world."

And the testimony of the martyrs is the testimony of consecrated Christians to-day. We read it in Livingstone's last record in his journal, in his lonely hut in the Bangwulo wilderness, as, bowed in prayer, he summoned his failing strength to write, and was found kneeling and dead at daylight: "March 19th, 1872. Birthday. My Jesus, my King, my life, my all! Again I dedicate myself to thee."

We hear it in the life of that young missionary in India who passed away saying, "India is Christ's;" in the last words of the brilliant young McCall of the Livingstone-Congo mission, dying in mid-work: "Lord, I gave myself, body, mind and soul, to thee; I consecrated my whole life and being to thy service, and now if it please thee to take myself instead of the work which I would do for thee, what is that to me? Thy will be done." Harrington in Massai land, and Keith Falconer among his Arabs in Aden, and Coleridge Patterson sacrificed to the savages in Melane-

sia, and Pinkerton dead on the borders of Umzila's country, and Bagster at Bihé, and the host of other beautiful lives freely given for Christ and his gospel, what are they but so many parts of the undying song of the ages, in testimony to Christ our Lord?

It is the testimony from martyrs and missionaries, from humble homes and from scenes of heroic sacrifice, from men of every nation and clime, who first have found Jesus Christ the Saviour who laid down his life in atoning sacrifice for their sins, and then, confessing his name, and giving themselves to his service, have had revealed to them the face of the living Christ, who came to be with them through their pilgrimage, to sustain them in their service, to comfort them in their trials, to pardon them in their follies, to welcome them home at last, when they shall see his face and be like him.¹

¹ See Note 11.

VI
THE
AFFIRMATION OF THE INCARNATION

**“Conceived by the Holy Ghost
Born of the Virgin Mary”**

“Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

MATTHEW 1: 20.

CHAPTER VI

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE INCARNATION

After nineteen hundred years, the local circumstances in which the birth of our Lord occurred, and the little communities connected with it, retain the central place in human thought. No one can speak their names, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Judæa, without feeling how the world has changed since they were first heard in connection with Jesus Christ, and how truly that great and almost indescribable change in the world and in the life of men is because of him.

Whatever tradition may have attached to the original story (and you know how tradition seeks to exaggerate great events in human life), and however speculation has been concerned with the person and work of the Lord Jesus, the fact of his birth stands unaffected. We read, as all the world reads on Christmas day, the story of the first announcement of the birth of a real person—the greatest of men. Wrapped, as the quaint narrative says, in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, there was a child who was to prove in later life what the angels announced,

the long-looked-for Messiah and King, Jesus, who should save his people from their sins. The angels proclaimed his birth, and the very earth itself seemed to join with the heavens above in the joy which men as yet so little understood, but which was to be henceforth the fountain of all joy.

From that hour, all human history needed to be rewritten—that rewriting of history which, in these days, is frequently upon our lips, especially in connection with man's life and with the structure of society of which Christ is the hope. We have often to remind ourselves of the greatness of the change that has taken place, even in our own day; a change that would be marvelously emphasized for us if we could stand with the men of the past and look out upon the world of modern science as it is to-day. Suppose Sir Isaac Newton were permitted to come back, and some reverent teacher should open to him the attainments of natural science now, what significance would be given to his saying when he described himself as “a child playing with the pebbles on the seashore, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before him”? Or suppose that thoughtful philosopher Kepler, discovering the laws of the heavens as he interpreted the law by which the physical universe is bound into oneness, were now to come back and see how that law has been amplified in its realiza-

tion, how from it have sprung countless other laws, until, like blossoms upon a tree in its new fruitage, the science of things on the earth has opened out into a science of the universe, in which the distinction between the natural and the supernatural has disappeared, and only the natural and the unnatural, the normal and the abnormal, remain. Or suppose, after a half century, Humboldt were permitted to return, and were moved to write again the story of man's present scientific knowledge, would he for a moment desire to bring out, or remind people of what he wrote in the past? He would be the first to say, "That may all be thrown aside. The work must be begun anew. There is nothing in the story of that day that can compare with the story of this: there is little, indeed, worth remembering. Geology, chemistry, biology, astronomy, all are new." All their deductions, their speculations, were as a child's knowledge. Not that man's thought is deeper or profounder, or his intellectual force greater to-day than in the past, but because of the vast addition that has been made to human knowledge, and in the furnishing of so much new material to-day, the records of the physical world are practically begun anew.

Still more completely did human history need to be rewritten, as the story of man's moral development and of his relations to God, as these were affected by

the first Christmas. The real interpretation of existence only then became possible. How little the world was conscious of it! It had its own interpretation of the prophecies, which were sufficiently startling; but to-day we know that, whatever old prophecies remain unfulfilled, this is sure, that nineteen hundred years ago a child was born, of the tribe of Judah, in the city of David, who was called Christ; and that in him as a fresh point all the devious lines of the revelation of God to man in the past converged; and from him again all the unfolding of the future has diverged, as his life and power and work embrace to-day all that man is and hopes to be. Kingdoms have risen and fallen because of him. Dynasties have appeared, done their work, been changed by his truth, and passed away. Many a noble head has been laid down, many a lofty spirit has suffered in his name. For the first time men have grasp upon the knowledge of God, and know what the loving Father has planned for them. Not only have countless individual lives been changed, but all the world has been made new. Europe has become the center of the world's history, because Christ has found his home in European institutions, and by the impulse of his love in their hearts, missionaries from Europe have gone over the world, until the story of Jesus Christ is preached in every land.

This, then, is the outlook of Jesus as given to us to-day. Jesus Christ stands the one great fact. Infidels have denied that there was such a person. Rationalists have subordinated him to an ideal. Pantheists have sunk him in an eternal incarnation of God in his world. Mystics have dissipated him in the shadowy realm of spirits. Open foes and false friends have perverted his teaching and obscured the glory of his person. And yet he has emerged from all alike unaltered. No dimness has come to the luster of his name, no spot has been found, in the scrutiny of the centuries, upon the perfection of his matchless character. He stands to-day as he has always stood, the Redeemer of men, the one hope of the world.

We turn our thoughts, in common with other Christians, to the circumstances which surround the birth of our Lord. They are what we should expect. The story is everywhere charged with divinity. Coming to it from whatever standpoint, no one can read this story without feeling that everywhere it bears the stamp of the other world. It is filled with the spirit of the supernatural. Open it where you will. Take the circumstances of his birth; take Mary's song; take the scene of the shepherds; take the coming of the wise men; you recognize that here is a story differing from all other stories. It is not its simplicity, its sweetness, its dignity; it is not any one

thing, either in its substance or its form, that constitutes its abiding distinction, or supplies the reason for its impressiveness upon all classes. You may read it to little children, to the poor, the suffering, in the asylum, in the prison; every eye is intent, every heart shows the same surrender to the mysterious power of this story. It seems a little patch plucked out of heaven. Read in any land, the effect is the same. Our civilization is not above its level, nor is the rudest savage tribe so remote from it but that the missionary can sit down and tell the story to the most degraded. The one explanation of this is in the divinity that hedges it about, and the divineness that is in it. It is the story of the birth of the Son of God. The Christian has the true interpretation. There was nothing sudden about it, nothing unlooked-for from the Christian standpoint. The virgin birth shall not disturb us. As an incident in the narrative in every way appropriate, we accept it. We have no wisdom to go beyond what is written.¹

If there is a Father in heaven, a loving God, the Maker of us all; if the story of man's fall is true, and God's relation to it, and God's promises, even in man's despair, then the yearning after God of the men of the Old Testament, and of the better spirits among the heathen, and the testimony of our own souls, even

¹ See Note 1.

in our darkest hours—all this converges upon the fact, and shows that just so he would reveal himself. God would so come down into human life, he would so take up human life to himself, he would so establish this bond between his creatures and himself, because God so loved the world.¹

The mystery which hangs over the beginnings of every human life is only gathered up in a new form over this life. A little child is put into our arms. How mysterious its presence! A new life has come out of eternity, to live forever, to think God's thoughts, to feel, responsive to the divine love, to be an active agent forever in working out the plans of a holy and a loving God, in all the universe. This is the interpretation of the strange awe and tenderness that come into every home with the birth of a little child. How all this is gathered up in marvelous intensity, how it all gains a new depth and fulness of meaning as we go back to the birth of that babe in Bethlehem! As God is present in all life, so God himself, in the fulness of the divine, was in that birth, not only for that hour, and for Mary who hid these things in her heart, and for the awed witnesses as they stood impressed as never before, but for all men and all time.

But not only is it the story of the coming of the

¹ See Notes 2 and 3.

divine into humanity, it is also the story of the birth of humanity itself. This is an equally important truth for us. We read the story of man's life in Eden. It is strange; it belongs, in our thought, to a very remote past. The world has so changed since then. Man has changed in his thought, in his surroundings, in his own person. We have small power of interpreting that old story. We content ourselves with the great central fact that in the beginning God created the earth and prepared it to be the abode of man; that when man came to consciousness he found himself possessed of a sense of right and wrong; that with transgression came the burden of guilt upon all mankind, and the wrath of the divine righteousness upon man's iniquity. Then follows the enduring promise of the divine revelation of pardon and of life. Beyond that we cannot look.

But when we turn to the story of Jesus, how different! At once all our inquiry begins to be answered. Every man reads the story for himself, and seeks to find how Jesus Christ comes into his own life. He realizes the personal message. And so humanity—not the large humanity of the world but our own personal estate, with our temptations and our needs—finds itself stirred and thrilled by the possibility of what Jesus Christ has brought to us. We have received a revelation.

There is a distinct difference between inspiration and revelation. Inspiration is God's breathing into men thoughts and utterances the meaning of which they little understand—as God gave to the prophets visions and conceptions the significance of which they most imperfectly grasped, and which have been gaining an ever new and wider interpretation as man's life has enlarged. There is a perennial freshness in the way in which every new experience in one's own life that lays hold upon the heart rolls back the mist from the psalms and the prophets.

But when we come to revelation, we find that back of the coming down of God to man, there is the exaltation of man to receive the message from God. In revelation the plane of the inferior is in a measure lifted to the plane of the superior, that the higher life may impart itself to the lower. It is the bridge across which God comes to man. We feel as we read the story of Jesus that God is with us. All humanity is exalted in its tenderness, in its depth of possible emotion, in its sweet thoughts now enlarged, in the peace of forgiveness to men who have destroyed themselves by their own sin. We gain a new meaning of human life. What is this but that revelation of God to man, for which the time had come?

We understand now, as men did not understand then, how all the measures of man's life, his methods

of government, his forms of religion, his civilization, were full and falling to pieces when Christ was born. No existing literature, or ritual, or legislation, or social order, was large enough for the world's needs. The world had come to a condition that was without fruitfulness and without hope. The best that men could say was, "Endure! Meet the inevitable with philosophy. We come, we know not whence, and go, we know not whither." Into such a world, with its consciousness of degradation and despair, Jesus Christ came. And at once we find that human life is uplifted in order that God may speak to it; there rises before us the bridge by which God may come again to man, his creature.

So we turn again to the story of Jesus Christ, and find that God has come down to man in the person of his Son, and that Christ has come to work out the will of God upon earth. If that is true, all men are to have their part also in working out the will of God. We are on earth under limited conditions, burdened with our cares, depressed with our sorrows, everywhere hedged about by our ignorance and helplessness. But because Jesus Christ has entered into our life, he has shown that human life itself is not far from God, and God is very near to every one of us. And just as the old rituals of worship all had proved too small for the revelation of God to man, and for men's

work as children of God, so a new life to the individual has proved itself likewise a new life to the world: We have new legislation, new literature, a new human society, as humanity itself is exalted in the birth of Jesus Christ.

Heaven has come to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, not in spite of our mortality, but by way of it. Jesus came to do the will of the Father, being made in the likeness of man, in the restricted conditions of any other human life. He knew the narrowness of a little Jewish village, knew what it was to be confronted with the limitations of his race, his tribe; to strive in vain to break them; to be finally rejected and crucified. In the place assigned him, by the very help of conditions he could not change, he was to do the work of God. We are to do the same, not in spite of our conditions, but by the very force of them. So suffering becomes an instrument in God's service. It becomes something from which we do not expect to be delivered. But suffering, trial, disappointment, failure, all the mingled cup of the common, average, human life, interpreted by the story of Jesus Christ, becomes at once the instrument which God has put in the hands of every son of man, by which we are to work out the plan of God—nay, the love of God; by which we are to prepare ourselves for final acceptance by God, that we may grow in his likeness, and

at last be at one with him. "In all these things," said the apostle, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Here, then, is the lesson for us. The birth of our Lord was the coming down of God into human life. It was the revelation of the divine. And not on Christmas only, but each Lord's day, Christians gather for worship, using songs of praise and the mutual helpfulness of prayer, rejoicing in the peace of God, and the fuller, sharper sense of the presence of the unseen God, who is with us every day, in the belief that as he spoke nineteen hundred years ago, that revelation is renewed in the conditions of every living soul. He is filling all the world, and seeking to speak everywhere and always to us all.

So, again, we have in Jesus our pattern. For this Jesus accepted our human life. He did not consider oneness with the Father to be a thing to be clung to and coveted, but he gave himself of his own will to this life with all its limitations, its deprivations, its suffering, and at last its death, that he might be to us the pattern of a divine life. His lot was the lot of an accepted dependence. There is nothing so helpless as a little child, and we can hardly conceive of a life more humble than Jesus' life in Bethlehem and in the exile. He never emerged from this condition. He seems to have lived in his father's house until the be-

ginning of his ministry. Then he became a wanderer, homeless and dependent upon others for daily bread, touchingly grateful for sympathy, love or care. Nothing is bitterer to a proud spirit than this sense of dependence. Yet it is the constant appointment of the Lord's dear children, as loss or illness or age comes upon us, to emphasize the daily dependence upon others, under which, more or less, we all live, under the conditions in which no man's happiness or welfare can long stand in himself alone. That our Lord accepted this as the fixed condition of his earthly life makes this principle of cheerfully accepted personal dependence a foundation stone in the structure of society, and one of the chief of the divinely appointed agencies of man's ennobling.

Then our Lord accepted humiliation. With the accepted dependence in the home of Nazareth came all that humiliation of his later life when he was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And that humiliation of life is also to be the Christian's constant experience. How often we find ourselves weak when we think ourselves strong! How often the strong man loses his strength, the rich man his money, the man of lofty position his name and his influence! How often honor goes to the less worthy! How often we are called to bear the humiliation of detraction and slander and untruth

and the perversion of all our good! What is this but that God wishes that we his children should accept the bonds of suffering and disappointment in life? Here is likeness to Him who was ordained to this from the beginning. All this our Lord accepted as part of the necessary condition of human life, and therefore as essential to his redemptive work. It opened his own heart to the divine love, and it opened human hearts to his love. Because he went about his Father's business, and lived his Father's life in the presence of his countrymen, their hearts went out to him. For no life was too low for him; the woman at the well, Zacchæus the publican, the poor Syrophenician woman, the outcast, the heathen—in their affliction he was afflicted, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them. Through his accepting a service of humiliation, all that could be revealed of love entered into our life.

This, then, seems to me the supreme message of Christmas, the revelation of God in everyday life; the exalting of humanity through Jesus Christ out of the despairing darkness of the old world of heathenism; and the ennobling of our life with all its weakness and its suffering, making it the very instrument by which as of old the Son of God comes into the world to save the world. So to-day the divine Son himself does the Father's will in us, and through us, his children, as in

the strength that he gives, and the love that he inspires, and the desire and the loyalty of the heart that longs to be like him, we accept the divine appointments for us, and whether in weakness or in strength, in folly or in wisdom, in failure or in success, in burden or in trial, we give ourselves day by day to walking in his steps and doing his will. And as we so walk, and as we so live, the joy of the Lord is revealed, and the measures of our life are full and overflowing.

We try to make other lives glad, if but for an hour, on Christmas day. We wish we could carry the gladness beneath the surface of these other lives, and extend the blessing of Christmas through the year. Our transient joy seems pitiful in the face of the awful evils of the times. But the true remedy for those evils exists, and this day declares it. It is nothing more nor less than to do again what Jesus did—give one's whole self to such as are fallen below the power of helping themselves. To open one's heart, to love them, no matter how unworthy, to forgive even when forgiveness is not asked, to comfort and console before you speak of duties, to pity and not to upbraid, not to be afraid of the touch of evil, but to grasp it firmly with strong hands and, with a love that never despairs and cannot be destroyed, to carry Christ to men by being Christ to them—this is the whole secret. The

world will believe that the Son of God indeed was born into our life, when it sees him living in it. Each Christian life, however humble—and the more because it is humble—is a new incarnation of Christ.

VII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ATONING
SACRIFICE

**“Suffered under Pontius Pilate
was Crucified Dead and Buried”**

*“For while we were yet weak, in due season
Christ died for the ungodly.”*

ROMANS 5: 6.

CHAPTER VII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ATONING SACRIFICE

Concerning the fact of the death of Jesus, there is no question. His foes as well as his friends from the beginning have affirmed it, or taken it for granted. In the year 30 A. D., Pontius Pilate being governor, Jesus of Nazareth, after a hasty condemnation, was led outside the walls of Jerusalem and put to death according to the Roman mode, on the cross. His enemies have used it as a witness and argument against the faith of Jesus; and, taught of the Lord, his friends from the first have made the instrument of his death the symbol of his triumph.

It has been said that had it not been for the exaltation of the watchword of the cross, the post-apostolic Church of the second century would probably not have been able to maintain its conviction of the sacrificial significance of the death of Christ as it did. But this was fixed securely as an article of faith by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which Jesus' own act had established liturgically in Christian worship. Not his teachings, not the wonder of his beautiful life, but his giving himself in death, is the great fact in the

redemption of the world by Jesus Christ. And because of the fixing of the truth in that way, and the place which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has occupied in every age, this remains to-day the great central truth of the Christian faith. Atonement was constituted for a sinning world by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.¹

So much, then, for the affirmation, the simple form of which we find in the Apostles' Creed. But we cannot be content with the mere affirmation, we must understand its true significance. For the Church has harbored widely different views as to the meaning of the sacrifice. It has been made to mean a price paid to the devil for the redemption of souls that belong to him. It has been regarded as a compensation to appease the vengeance of an angry God. It has been interpreted as a justification of the moral law—a sort of ransom required by the divine government under which, to protect the community, or to vindicate the outward constitution, some equivalent offering must be provided. At the other extreme it has been looked upon as a dramatic appeal to the emotions of men, that by the sight of that tragic spectacle men should be led to God. But the Church has never been content with its interpretations, though it has been often tempted to make of them a test or *crux*.

¹ See Notes 1 and 2.

Human thought has not yet grasped the meaning of the atonement, and the plummet of man's experience has not yet gone to the depth of that divine act which has become the pivotal point of all the movement of God in bringing the world back to himself.

Notwithstanding the variety of views, a few things are very clear. The New Testament, over and over, teaches that Jesus died for the ungodly. Our word *for* is not sufficiently expressive of the Greek of the New Testament, which declares Christ died both instead of, and in behalf of, sinners—as when in loving sympathy one puts himself in the place of another, to do for him what he could not do for himself; as a physician puts his heart into the work of saving his patient, or as when one is an actual substitute for another. It speaks of Jesus Christ as becoming a curse for us, taking on himself all the moral sickness, all the transgression that brings entail of death, that, in so doing, he might give to us life; so that, he having died for us, we live, in virtue of what he has done. As when one takes up a burden, he carries our sins on the tree. It speaks of his death being that sufficient act, by virtue of which a man's sins may be blotted out and known no more.¹

Whatever be the logical interpretation, it is plain that our Lord regarded his own death as sacrificial.

¹ See Note 3.

At the announcement of his ministry it was foreshadowed: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The meaning was unmistakable in the thought of every hearer who stood around John the Baptist when he spoke the words. Our Lord never lost sight of the malignity of sin, or of the bitter and permanent warfare between himself, in his teaching, his acts, his spirit, from beginning to end, and the world before him. He lived a life serene, unspotted from the world, over against the sin which surrounded him. He was sent by his Father to secure the doing of God's will in the world that had become separated from the Father; and to do it to such an extent and in such a fashion that when his work should be finished, God would be so glorified in the face of, and in spite of, the sin rooted in every heart, that never again would there be need of a new revelation in proof of the pardoning power, or of the forgiving love, of God to any individual soul. When his work should be accomplished, he would be able to say, "I . . . accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."

How then shall we explain the sacrifice of Christ as related to man's nature? For we never can rest in any explanation of truth until it becomes related to what we regard as fundamental, to the ethics of our own morality, to the enduring relations of man to

man, and of man to God. How are we to interpret to our own hearts and to one another this divine sacrifice?

Perhaps one reason why the Church has stumbled over it is that only in these latter days men have come, in their widening knowledge, to understand how long and deep are the roots of man's thought and man's experience. We know the meaning of a thing only as we go back to its origin. We get the interpretation of words common on our lips by discovering the root meaning, and tracing its use until we come to the stamp and mintage of the word which passes current. Still more true is this in the interpretation of Scriptural doctrine. Every word is a metaphor. It suggests a thought. And, worn as it may be, like a pebble, by the attrition of the centuries, until we understand its origin we cannot interpret its full significance. Little children who never saw a sheep, for instance, are amazed when you show them the figure of a woolly lamb, and they are told its connection with the idea of Jesus as the good Shepherd. Atonement, what does it mean? At-one-ment; it is in the Hebrew an expiation or a reconciliation by covering the offense. From the same verb comes the name for the lid of the ark in which were the law and the testimony covered by the cherubim with overshadowing wings—God shutting up the broken

law, that the erring people might draw near to him. The atoning, vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ—before we can understand it, we must know the origin and use of the phrase in the language of the people to whom it was spoken.

We have in recent years for the first time a careful and elaborate study of the religion of the Shemites. It is now possible for us therefore to trace the origin of their religious rites, and get at their original conceptions.

There was a time, very long ago, when men believed that they shared a common life with their god and their domestic animals. The bond was a physical one; and the proof of the unbroken relationship between the tribe and their god was simply their prosperity—food was plenty, or they were at peace with their neighbors. When trouble appeared, they thought their god was displeased, and sought some way to renew the interrupted community of life. As they looked upon the animals as sharing this life, what more natural than that they should seek the offering that should bring about reconciliation and renewal in the blood of a chosen animal? To obtain the blood, they slew the animal, offering a part to the god, and drinking the remainder, or when this proved repugnant, eating the flesh instead.

It was not a long step to the time when doubt

should arise as to whether the life of an animal could suffice for the sacrificial reunion of god and man; and a human victim was sought, perhaps for the first time in some hour of their distress, in the presence of pestilence, or famine, or overwhelming defeat, and offered always with the thought of reestablishing and reuniting the life that had been broken—though there might be no higher conception of the value of that reunited life than the material good it secured. When in a later day Carthage, besieged by Agathocles, offered as burnt sacrifices two hundred boys of the highest aristocracy, and when, being successful, she sacrificed the most beautiful of her captives, it was but the perpetuation of the old ritual, in the form in which it lingered among the heathen for ages; finally coming back, in the days of her degeneracy, to corrupt Israel herself.

The day came for the final discovery, declared by Jehovah to Abraham, that a ram caught in the thicket by his horns might be acceptably offered instead of the son.

This now is shown to have been the real succession of events, and this the original conception of sacrifice.

The essential thought was taken up into the Old Testament ritual, when the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the altar, as the part assigned to God,

and upon the people, to mark their participation. A relation of covenant was established. God had come to be a holy God. In his gracious condescension a new life was made available for his people, establishing them in perpetual communion with him. The thought is very clear in the ritual for the consecration of a priest. The offering was of the caul, the fat, and the liver, as the organs closely related to the life. Then the blood was put upon the ear, hand and foot of the priest, that the new life might be manifest, in his thought, his work, his ways, as the servant of God.

Israel's peculiar possession was her new, deep sense of sin. The break between man and God is a moral one. God is estranged because of man's transgression, and that transgression becomes exceeding sinful because of the character of the righteous God. Reunion with him could not be found through the physical life, whether of animal or of man. Sacrifice continued. It was still the offering of blood, for "the life of the flesh is in the blood," and "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." But gradually the conception became clearer, as human life became loftier and purer; and while the underlying thought remained that "it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life," the reunion with God that was sought and that ensued was of the thought and spirit.

A deep sense of personal guilt lay at the bottom of the separation. That was removed in the acceptance of the sacrifice and the renewal of the life.

The fall from this high spiritual conception came about, just as it does to-day when men content themselves with performing a ritual, and are oblivious to its true meaning. Prosperity brought wealth and luxury. The example and habits of their heathen neighbors began to undermine both the morals and the conceptions of the Israelites. Samuel rebukes Saul: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." We hear the Psalmist sing, "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in." "Lo, I am come." "I delight to do thy will, O my God." With the prophets the protest grows indignant: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats." "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well."

Oneness of life with God cannot be had as of old, but it is to be found through a sacrifice, the real virtue of which lies in the moral self-surrender of the worshiper. Sacrifice is still the offering of a common life, but it is of a life which God can share, not that of

an animal or a slain prisoner. The highest expression of it in the Old Testament is in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in the vision of Him who, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, is to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and who shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied, for he shall justify many.

How different is this whole conception from what has been read into the Old Testament by the later centuries! The original thought is the desire for renewed life, the longing for assured fellowship with the source of all life. And all the forms of sacrifice, with its perversion and darkness and bloody offerings, have been man's struggle after that life of God, which sin in some form has destroyed.

Questions arise. Did our Lord from the beginning of his ministry foresee the inevitable death that awaited him? It matters not. He saw clearly the relation in which the surrender of self has always stood and will always stand to the development of the kingdom of God. This it was of which he was to give proof. In all the past, men had only done God's will as they gave up their will to his. They brought themselves into a masterful self-discipline, as pictured in the great prophets of Israel, who despised the luxury and political pride and ambition for which men around them contended. They swept these aside, as

they swept aside the ritual which had become perverted by contact with heathenism, that the people might see that the true life is found only when a man puts self under his feet that he may do the will of God.

Jesus, called in the prime of his young manhood to stand as an interpreter of all that the prophets had said, beginning at Moses, preached the things concerning himself. We see him grasping this tremendous truth of the past and advancing to a new interpretation of it, as he proceeded to do the will of his Father, offering himself as the bread that is consumed in eating, and the wine that is poured out to be drunk, as he gave his life in sacrifice for others.

His public ministry opens with the great temptation, which was aimed directly at this his purpose of self-renunciation. The Messianic conceptions and ideals of Israel naturally had possessed his thoughts. They are used by Satan as temptations to lead him to take into his own hand the ordering of his new work. Plausible as are the suggestions, he perceives their true significance, and sweeps one after another aside, that he may go forward in the pathway of loyal obedience to the will of God. So he begins the self-renunciatory ministry in which day by day it becomes clearer to him that a completer sacrifice will be required. The shadow of the cross reaches down to

meet him. He begins, months before the end, to speak of his death which he shall accomplish. He interprets its meaning, as he turns back to the old prophets: he is to be despised and rejected; bruised for others' transgressions; and by his stripes they are to be healed. He foresees the final triumph: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." And in the last hour, when the completed act of surrender of his life to God has come, he says, "It is finished." "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

The sacrifice of Jesus is far other than paying a penalty, or offering a substitute. It is the reestablishing of a life. The divine grace has made this possible. God condescends to enter into a new covenant, in which the death of Jesus is a sacrificial seal, as the offering made by Moses in Exodus xxiv was the seal of the covenant with Israel. The life now made possible is appropriated by faith, and becomes a permanent possession, witnessing to itself. God consents to impute to the beginnings of this new life the evidential value of its final attainments, and to accept the forgiven sinner as completely his son, at the moment of his giving himself to Christ. Oneness of life with God has then begun. God's covenant becomes the guaranty of its continuance, as Jesus' death is guaranty of faithful service on the part of the be-

liever. Jesus' sacrifice was in his will, rather than in his bodily sufferings. For the real essence of the atonement is in Jesus' absolute surrender of his will to his Father in behalf of sinful men. His bodily sufferings are as it were a ritual of the inward sacrifice. The aim of the atonement is perfect obedience; therefore we are "saved by his life;" the sacrifice has opened the way to a life in which the believer becomes one with the living Christ, and through him at one with God.¹

God does not need the sacrifice in order that his grace may have existence. But because of the actual value it has in God's eyes, it becomes, to use Wendt's phrase, an "actually operative motive" for God to satisfy his gracious will. In this sense it is the seal of the new covenant, and by it Jesus is made the High Priest, not after the law of a ceremonial commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He offered his life through the eternal Spirit, through the free, loving choice of a will whose determination has eternal value, because it is of a divine-human person, and has the seal of a redeeming death.²

We can apply to it the accustomed terms. It is a ransom, for by it sinners are delivered from death. It is a propitiation, for with it God has reconciled the world unto himself, and has accomplished the purpose

¹ See Notes 4, 5 and 6.

² Notes 7 and 8.

dear to the heart of the holy God. It is vicarious, because Jesus has voluntarily given himself to a suffering without which man could not be saved. It is sacrificial, for it establishes a new covenant of life. It is an atonement, for by it sin is covered, and man is rendered growingly at one with God. It restores the life of God in man to such extent that it compels the sinner to look at sin with God's eyes, to judge it with God's judgment, and hate it as God hates it, to the end that he not only repents but turns from it forever.¹

"What is the atonement?" asked David Livingstone of his solitary soul in the last months of his African wanderings. "It is Himself. It is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God made apparent to human eyes and ears; the everlasting love disclosed by our Lord's life and death. It showed that God forgives because he loves to forgive."

"Is not the love of Christ for us sinners very wonderful?" said a church officer to a poor old colored woman, as they paused in the vestibule after a moving sermon upon the sufferings of Christ. "Oh, no," was the answer, "it is not wonderful at all. It is just like him."

He knows what the life with God is. He sees it broken in us. To restore us to God, he gladly faces

¹ See Notes 9, 10 and 11.

any sacrifice. Counting not even being on an equality with God a thing to be held on to, he takes upon him the form of a servant, and becomes obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross, for our sake. And now, to complete that sacrificial act, he presents himself as our Saviour, coming with the life that is in him to dwell in us, planting the new life and nourishing it until it shall grow and ripen and bear fruit, and even sinners, such as we, shall discover that we too are sons of God.¹

¹ See Note 12.

VIII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE
RESURRECTION

“The Third Day He rose from the Dead”

“[We] believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.”

ROMANS 4: 24, 25.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE RESURRECTION

Let us put ourselves, in thought, back at the hour when the bewildered company of the disciples, after the crucifixion, found themselves alone. We can best understand something of their feelings when in God's providence we are called to stand at the open grave of one we love, and the mystery of death rises before us. We know that the voice we loved we shall no longer hear; the face, so precious to us, we shall no longer see. The living atmosphere which the loved one has created for us is suddenly swept away; we awake to a world that appears strange, unsympathetic, having little understanding of us and our feelings and needs, and yet one in which we are compelled to go on as if life had not changed. Then all the mystery of what lies beyond presses upon us.

But when we recall such hours, and strive to picture to ourselves the state of mind of the disciples when the Lord had died, we are still quite unfitted to understand what that event meant to them. The unseen world of heathenism had long pressed up against them; a world peopled with innumerable

spirits of gods and men, vast in its extent, mysterious in its details and character. But no voice had ever come out of that world to disclose its true nature, and the heart of humanity was everywhere burdened and overpowered with the insoluble mystery.

These men were Jews, and behind them was the Old Testament story. They knew here and there of a man who had "walked with God: and was not; for God took him." But how little there is in the Old Testament of immortality or of detail or suggestion as to what life beyond the grave may be. Immortality may be assumed, but it is not unfolded. With that glimmering lamp of the Old Testament, these Jews had turned in faith to Jesus. He was one come out of the other life with an authoritative message as to its reality—coming to bear witness in himself to all its possibilities. And suddenly this revealer of the unseen is himself mastered and crushed and trampled upon by the old enemy—Death! The open grave with all its hideousness, with all its darkness, with all its power of despair, yawns again before them.

Before we advance to consider the affirmation of the resurrection and see the fulfilment of the prophecy of the centuries, we find a phrase interjected in the Creed: "He descended into hell." It appears in the Apostles' Creed for the first time in the eighth century, and in any creed only as early as about 400 A.D.,

when we find it in the Creed of Aquileia; although it is affirmed in the writings of some of the early Fathers. We ask what it means, and what was its purpose. It is given as an amplification of the phrase "was crucified, dead, and buried," for which it was substituted as an equivalent affirmation. It was introduced in the exigencies of controversy.¹ It was the reply of the Church to those who affirmed that Christ had a human body and not a human soul. The Church said "He was crucified, dead, and buried" as a man, and if that does not content you, we will say "He descended into the place of the dead," which he could do only in a complete humanity. The phrase was addressed to a definite heresy. It met no general need, and it does not appear in the Scripture. Paul has nothing of it in his formal utterance, "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." And the statement in 1 Peter 3: 19, about preaching to the spirits in prison, "which aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah," is altogether too restricted and too uncertain of interpretation to serve for the foundation of a distinct affirmation of the

¹ See Note 1.

faith in some new and important relation.¹ There was much confusion among the early Fathers as to the place and condition of the dead. The Bible knows only two conditions, and not three, whether before or after the judgment. But mythology has Hades as the preliminary place of all departed spirits, and this term in time crept into the Christian conception. But it took seven centuries and the development of the doctrine of purgatory to secure for it formal recognition in connection with our Lord's descent into it. The phrase as now used is without substantial warrant, and is misleading. It was left out of the Book of Common Prayer as adopted for use in the American Episcopal Church, by the convention in Philadelphia in 1785, and was only restored at the particular request of the English ecclesiastical authorities. We may pass it by as not properly a part of the Confession.²

The resurrection of our Lord on the third day was made at the outset the corner-stone of the faith of the new Church. "If Christ be not risen," it was said, "your faith is vain and our preaching is vain, the dead in Christ have perished, and we are still in the common condemnation of the heathen."

Before we can proceed to examine either the use which the early Church made of the belief, or the

¹ See Note 2.

² Notes 3, 4, 5 and 6.

proof of its truthfulness, we are confronted with Hume's argument as to the inherent impossibility of ever proving a miracle. The ineradicable scepticism of the human mind toward all possible evidence of such an event was a point well taken with the conception of nature that maintained in his day. But that conception has radically changed. Nature to-day embraces far more than the material world. Mind to-day is held as truly natural as is, for example, flesh, radical as is the distinction between them. Nature embraces man in his entirety. If mind is natural, then spirit and soul are natural. The realm of nature expands until it includes all that man has experienced or can experience, though it is not by any means confined to this. It reaches up to and includes what has been regarded a distinct world, that of the spirit. There is no good reason why it may not, as the concept of orderly existence, include God.

About the time of our Lord there lived a great Latin poet, Lucretius. Those who know his story know that he was a devout and earnest man who warred against the superstitions of his day, and strove to show men the wonders of nature and the unseen possibilities of existence; how all things are related as part of one universe, the seen and the unseen, and how man is the apparent center of all. He was misunderstood; his name passes as that of a great un-

believer, but in fact—as is so often the case—he was simply a man far beyond his times; he grasped a truth which the modern centuries have slowly wrought out. A hundred and fifty years ago Bishop Butler said, “There is no absurdity in supposing that there may be many beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge and views may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation may appear to them natural, *i.e.*, analogous, or conformable to God’s dealings with other parts of his creation, as natural as the visible, known course of things appears to us.” Bishop Butler also proved in this a prophet, and his tentative position has already come to be accepted as philosophically sound.

We have discovered that the supernatural is not the logical antithesis to the natural. Stated accurately it is nature and the unnatural, or that which militates against nature, or antagonizes the uniform method of nature. We get the right term from the realm of ethics. We find no suggestion of antithesis to nature until we come to this. Only in moral relations do we find the conception. We speak, for example, of an unnatural son, when we mean a son whose conduct violates the normal relation of parent and child; as we speak of unnatural crime when we mean something not to be accounted for by the impulses or passions of common humanity. Sin, therefore, is the

real and only antithesis to the natural. Professor Huxley was mistaken in saying that immorality is as natural as morality. The immoral is not natural. It is just the one thing in all the world that is unnatural. Everywhere in nature there is wisdom, will, purpose and progress, for God is in all. That only is unnatural which is contrary to nature, which would resist the unfolding of the divine thought, the realization of the divine purpose. All else is natural.

This at once disposes of the argument against the possibility of miracles and of the resurrection. Are not such events witness to the progressive purpose of the creative God, revealing himself in new manifestations of his ways as man's spirit widens to receive the truth? Is it not the answer to the great yearning of the old Latin poet as he sat up night after night, as he tells us, striving to find words that would express his thought and awaken his friend to his own belief in the reality of the unseen? The incarnation, the divine human life, and the resurrection of the living Christ, are crowning events in the unfolding of the divine plan of which nature is our best known daily expression.

Teachers of social science are showing that progress is the test of a stable civilization. That is wise which promotes the permanent welfare of the community, which is in the line of progress judged

with reference to man's entire nature. So the Church comes with an advancing revelation both of God himself and of his purpose toward the world, as the plan in which is to be set every new truth concerning God and his Son, and his eternal Spirit.

Upon this setting, this mighty conception of nature as the universe, the entire creative work of God, in which man is not only a part, but of which he is the supreme product, we have the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Church affirms concerning him, "I believe in Jesus Christ, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead." And when the old reply is heard, "That is impossible," her assured answer is, "Not so. It is just the most natural and probable fact in all history. In any case it is of a kind to be established by proper proofs." Then we are free to proceed to the examination of the evidence.

There is, first, the character of the witnesses. Everywhere this truth was spoken against. The Sadducees among the Jews, the leaders among the heathen, the philosophers everywhere, when the resurrection of the dead was mentioned, mocked. To one and all the Christians answered, "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." It was the steady, triumphant, undeviating testimony of the men who started the swinging march of the Chris-

tian centuries. "We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen." And the men who bore the testimony proceeded at once to stake their lives and what was dearer than life, their Christian faith, upon the affirmation of that to them indisputable fact. They had seen the risen Christ, or they had talked with those who had, and he had shown himself by many infallible proofs. Moreover, he lived to them now, and their lives were witness to his living in them. They were most convincing in their unconscious testimony. They were strikingly changed themselves. From having been upbraided because of their hardness of heart, they displayed now a robust and stalwart faith. They "saw, and believed." A new light had broken forth for them, and in the power of it they were new men.

Then there is the testimony of the Church itself and of its various institutions. These must be accounted for. The resurrection is wrought into them all. The Lord's day, what is it but a perpetual witness to the resurrection of Christ? The Supper is the memorial of a sacrificial death, and also a festal meal; why, except as the seal of a new covenant, and witness to the resurrection life, to the living and present Christ, and to sitting with him at last at the wedding supper of the Lamb? Baptism, what is that but testimony of a new life already realized by the risen Christ, in

oneness with whom the forgiven sinner also lives? So on through all the institutional history of the Church. "To read the history of the Christian Church," said the late R. H. Hutton, "without the belief that Christ has been in organic and vital relation with it, seems to me to read it under the impression that a profound illusion can for centuries exercise more power for good than the truth."¹ There is no surer evidence of an historic event than its constructive results. If you desire to be certified of such an event as, for example, the expulsion of the Pisistratides from Athens, or of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, or of the beheading of Charles the First, you find the record in the rise of the Athenian democracy, or of the Roman empire, or of the English commonwealth. With equal certainty the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to be read in the Christian Church. The Church is the greatest event in the modern world, whether judged by its history, or by its present power. It began in the resurrection of Jesus, and has lived in his life.

In the same line is the spiritual experience of individual believers. It is not to be read in visible institutions, but it is none the less a substantial and indisputable fact. In all ages the Church has been able to show a multitude of men and women whose

¹ "Theological Essays," p. 285.

changed lives witness to the substantial character of their testimony, when we find them, from Paul onward, unanimous in attributing the change in themselves to the power of the living Christ. It does not do to meet this with a reference to the power of a persistent superstition. Man's spiritual history furnishes well attested facts which are as genuine material for scientific induction as any other class of facts. This testimony has from the beginning been successfully advanced in witness to the truth.

Cyprian, the defender of the African Christians, appeals to the facts of his personal experience, which he holds as indisputable as they are evident. Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa dwell on the startling changes which Christ has wrought in human society, his power to subdue the hearts of men, and to deliver them from the fear of death and the dominion of sin. This is the constant appeal on the lips of the early apologists. "To those," says Gregory, "who do not wilfully resist the truth no slight demonstration of the divine Incarnation is afforded by the testimony of the facts themselves." "They took knowledge of them," says the early record, "that they had been with Jesus." While over against this ever-renewed evidence of the Christian life, the deserted and decaying shrines of heathenism and the hopeless character of heathen ethics stand as witness to the Redeemer's triumph.

There remains to be added the testimony of the contemporary writers as found in the New Testament. Three of the gospels, however written, were in existence certainly by the year A.D. 80, and they contain detailed accounts of the resurrection. At least four of the epistles of Paul have never been questioned as to their authenticity by any critic worthy of note, and they all are shaped, in warp and woof, by the apostle's unalterable conviction of the same truth. These must be accounted for if the resurrection did not occur. It is impossible to believe in a retrospective attempt to create for theological purposes a false tradition concerning a period and events that were then so recent. The circumstances were altogether too adverse, and hostility was too bitter and too alert for such an attempt to succeed. It is far easier to accept the truth of events which, much as they were antagonized, proved indisputable, than to try to explain how an unfounded claim of such a startling character should have won wide and influential acceptance.

If we were seeking evidence of a historic event merely, we might gather also the testimony of unbelievers. But when the question is of the beginning of a new life in the world, and new powers of human action, and new attainment of spiritual being, then there could be no testimony without the life itself.

We turn instinctively to that, the testimony of the millions of believers who to-day know Jesus Christ.

As believers we unite, not as affirming our faith in a historic Christ, not as drawn together by force of a tradition of what happened on the hills of Judæa eighteen hundred years ago. We are in the line of that great company, the noble army of martyrs, and those others following them who, in all lands and all conditions, have known Jesus Christ themselves. There are in heathen lands missionaries who have given up all that life presents as dear to any man—home and comfort and friends and prospects—to do what? To go to the far islands of the South Pacific, among savages, to bury themselves as Livingstone did in Central Africa, to stand single-handed at posts of peril in Armenia, to work on through all the turmoil of nations battling in China; unfaltering in their faith, ardent in their testimony, to what? To the presence with them of the living Christ. Prisoners in jail, sufferers on the hospital cot, toilers in all departments of God's great vineyard to-day, witnessing a good confession, bearing trial and loneliness and disappointment and loss of the favor of men, enduring bodily pain and the weight of advancing years, and greeting oncoming death with a kiss, because they know Jesus Christ as a present help in every time of need, their Comforter and Guide, their Saviour and Lord; whose final word

of "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" shall be the crown above crowns in their triumph, and the peace deeper than peace in their hearts.

Now it is this that forms the united testimony upon the strength of which the Church repeats that glorious affirmation of triumph, "The third day he rose from the dead."

But any infidel is competent to gather for us historic testimony concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any historian can tell us how inconceivable it is that the Christian Church should have lived all these centuries with the glorious story of Christ and of struggle in his name—should have lived such a story, to have it then prove idle and untrue. The question is, What does the affirmation mean to the Church? The Church knows that Jesus Christ, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Therefore in the consciousness of the riches given to us of God in the new life brought down from God out of heaven to us sinners by Jesus Christ our Lord—a life planted in the death of our sinful hearts by divine grace, cultured and kept alive in our feebly-growing Christian experience, and constituting, despite our sins and our unbelief, our one hope, both for this world and the world to come—in the consciousness of this im-

planted and sustained life of Jesus Christ in our hearts, we say, "The third day he rose from the dead;" and we live because he lives.

"What makes you think that you are a Christian?" said a member of the session to a young girl who had asked for reception into a Scotch church. The candidate looked up astonished, and simply answered, "Why, he saved my soul!" That was all; and that was enough. "He has saved *my soul*." If a man can say that of Jesus Christ, he can affirm all that the Church has said concerning his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection. It was all that he might save *my soul*. He has done it. Therefore I *believe*.¹

¹ See Note 7.

IX

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE EFFICIENT
CHRIST

**“He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at
the Right Hand of God the Father
Almighty”**

*“For Christ entered . . . into heaven itself,
now to appear before the face of God for us.*

HEBREWS 9: 24.

CHAPTER IX

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE EFFICIENT CHRIST

When we have satisfied ourselves as to the fact of the resurrection, the affirmation of the ascension of our Lord needs no proof. We pass on at once to try to understand its significance. And here we come again to what has been so often affirmed and illustrated—that the creed of the Church is by no means a mere dry and philosophic assertion of theoretical truth; it is the affirmation on the part of the Christian Church of its life—the life that is, and the life that is to come—one life—God working himself out in the children he has made.

As we read the story of Jesus, a very significant fact occurs in the account of the resurrection; that is, the striking change that took place in the attitude of his disciples toward him. Before the resurrection they lived with him as an intimate companion, following his counsels and occasionally feeling his rebuke. But the moment he appears in the resurrection form, all is changed. Without needing his words, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," they stand withdrawn from him. They are awed;

they are conscious of the benediction of his presence, but there is no hint of intimacy or even familiarity. There is no reaching out the hand to touch him, even when the invitation is given. They have awakened to a new world. The life in which the mortal puts on immortality, and the earthly body gives place to the heavenly, is suddenly realized. Even though they are reminded of Jesus' words that he should rise from the grave, and they had assembled in anticipation of it, the reality startles them. It suddenly changes everything. It was like nothing so much as awakening out of a dream. A new world opens, beside which the past suddenly becomes unreal and shadowy. It gathers up every interest into itself. It comes to them from without and from above. They are awed; they are not yet of it; but its coming to them, in the power of the risen Lord, makes them different men.

Then as we go on with the story we find that they promptly and cheerfully surrender any claim to superiority over other believers because of their having been received in the past into greater personal intimacy with Jesus. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." They have suddenly become aware of the significance of this new life into which Jesus had entered, of its meaning for them as well as for him.

They hasten to present themselves as witnesses, not of the miraculous healings nor of the sacrificial death of Jesus, but of his presence as one come into our life to save sinners, among whom they themselves are possessed only of this advantage, that they had known him first. This is remarkable. The only men who have a right to bear testimony stand before the Church to-day with the teaching that with a dead Christ the Christian method of salvation is useless, that the real Christ is as truly the companion of the penitent, believing soul to-day as he was ever the companion of Peter and John, and that it is as truly the privilege of the Church to-day to know him, to receive the life that is in him, and to get needed hourly help from him, as it ever was possible for that little company of his disciples to walk with him on the hills of Galilee, or to be protected by him from the storm on the Galilæan sea.

There is one of the epistles more than any other devoted to this theme, the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was apparently written just before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which occurred in the year A.D. 70. We can easily picture the situation. The Jewish converts were looking for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel; but the Lord delayed his coming. Meanwhile, so far from seeing the kings of the earth bringing their riches and their glory into

Zion, they saw gathering about them the threatening forces of the heathen. Persecution had arisen. The restlessness and turbulence of the Jews only made their destruction the more certain and immediate. In this time of distress, a message is given to one of these perplexed and despondent Hebrew Christians for his own people—a revelation as to the risen and ascended Christ, pointing out his real though unseen presence, and his power to comfort and strengthen in their present need.

The message is also for us. At the close of a century the greatest in history, when the world seems everywhere leaping forward to a millennium glory, so rapid has been the development of civilization in all its forms, we find ourselves paralyzed by the sluggishness of the Christian heart. Nations that should stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ are locked in deadly struggle or standing at guard against one another in eager greed to divide the plunder of the world among themselves. The cry of the oppressed is not heard; the strong do not hesitate to crush the weak; great accumulations of wealth have brought great power and great alienations; men everywhere distrust one another; passion has become prudent, but none the less selfish and cruel; and with all our boasted progress, the forces of evil were never more prevalent or more intense.

We are as men in a great battle which we hope we shall win, which we believe we shall win, but of which, from hour to hour, we can make out only the confusion of the fray. Personal loss and discipline have to be met. Trials grow thick at home as abroad, in business, in thought, in Christian work. New controversies continually arise. The wisest plans fail. Fruitage is often small. Old things pass quickly away. We ask, as the Church has asked so often in the years gone by, "What are the signs of His coming?" And again we hear the word of the Lord himself, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one." Therefore we must seek the source of strength, if we are to find it, not in eccentric interpretations of prophecy, not in setting times and seasons, or anticipating a sudden coming of our Lord in the skies, but rather in the summons to look up and fix our thoughts upon the abiding relationship of the ascended Christ to his people. We hear him say, "In your patience ye shall win your souls," and we ask ourselves, "How shall I do it unless He be with me, in my home, at my business, in the Church?" When I know what it means as testimony to the abiding presence of the living Christ in all my daily life that I say, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God," then I may well be at peace, come what will of personal trial or of delay in the method by which in his divine wisdom God brings in his kingdom.

I. We learn from the unfolding of the truth in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the ascension of Christ has given to the Church a more real sense of his presence. He now appears "before the face of God for us." The crucified Christ is in the very presence of God to-day for you and me; our present needs are his immediate concern; he could not be more really with us than he is.

Death brings to us a strange new sense of possession among those we love. They are taken from us and buried out of our sight. We are overwhelmed. The loss is irreparable. It is hard to understand how joy can find place again in our life. The blessed companionship in which our whole life seemed to be wrapped up is gone, and we surrender ourselves to the dull routine of daily duty with no expectation. Slowly we come to be aware that the loved one is not dead but living. We awake to a new, strange sense of possession. Time may change others, distance may divide, other interests may arise to lessen the strength of their affection, but this loved one will never change. He is beyond the realm of time, beyond the separations of space; there can be no division of interests or waning of love in him. He is where they see eye to eye, he is ours forever. And when the last day comes to the believer, his eager anticipation of his Lord is intermingled with that of glad reunion with those he has loved and lost.

Now, what is this but the earnest of a greater truth, a suggestion, an illustration, a consequence, a proof, as you will, of the reality of the presence of the unseen Christ? It is what the Saviour promised. "It is expedient for you that I go away." Why? "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." This new, inspiring, life-giving presence of God himself is to be the blessed possession of all believers for all time to come. "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."

The disciples at once entered into the sense of the Saviour's presence. He opened their understanding, he gave power to their words; in his name they said, "Rise up and walk;" he unlocked the prison doors and led them forth; at their death, as to Stephen, he personally appeared. From the day he appeared to him on the way to Damascus he was never distant from the Apostle Paul. In special hours, as in Corinth, he spoke to him, "Hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee." With the care of all the churches, keenly conscious of his bodily infirmities, holding himself as one born out of due time, it was this conviction of Christ as with him more fully and satisfyingly than he ever could have been had he remained in the flesh, that enabled the apostle to push on with his triumphant

but sacrificial load. The place the phrase "In Christ" takes in Paul's letters, reveals the intimacy of the fellowship he enjoyed.

This is what kept alive the hope of the Lord's speedy coming. He never is distant. He may at any time draw the veil that shuts out his visible presence. The martyr always expected to see his face before the onrush of the lions or the final effort of the torturer. Jesus is spiritualized by the resurrection, but not dehumanized. He has come into more intimate touch with his followers; he is closer to their hearts, a more real and personal possession.¹

II. The ascension of our Lord gives to us also a more effective application of his sacrifice. The life from God that Jesus brought into the world would never have been fully revealed by his example and teaching; it required the addition of his sacrificial death. "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Had we had only the example, we might have conceived of redemption for the righteous, but of no possible salvation for the ignorant, the hopeless, the despised. It was only after he had offered the one possible and sufficient sacrifice for sin, that he sat down at the right hand of God. Only then was the extent of the divine love revealed.

¹ See Note 1.

But for this our pride also would stand in the way of our salvation. You go with aid to the strong swimmer in trouble in the surf. You help him safely to the shore. How natural for him to say that he was not really in distress, that he could have got out by himself! The giving of Christ himself for us in a sacrifice, costly, complete and accepted, declares our helplessness. No example could have saved us. We all were sinners and had come short of the glory of God. Jesus, the crucified but risen and living Christ, alone can save us.

The emphasis of the New Testament is always upon this—the sacrifice of Christ made effective by his life. See how much the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews makes of the life of Christ. “He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him” (7: 25). How? Because of his sacrificial death? The very lowest sinner, the most degraded, the most helpless, he is able to save. Because his righteousness is imputed? That is not his thought. He is able to save to the uttermost, “seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them.” It is the crucified Christ who is the risen and ascended Christ, standing in the very presence of God, with our names written on his heart, who saves us as sinners.

Again, in the very opening of the epistle, God, who of old tried in a thousand ways to bring men to him—

self, and failed, "hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." Who "when he had made purification of sins"—shed his blood as a sacrifice to bring us to God—when he had done that, he "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels" (1: 3, 4)—so much better able to help us sinners. And again, he is a priest forever, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (7: 16). Thus the life of the Christian to-day is found in the living Christ who has ascended from the grave, and stands before God pleading for sinners, because his life he has planted in our hearts, and by his indwelling Spirit is nourishing it, until by divine grace we sinners shall be changed into the likeness of his own glory. It is this power of Christ, putting himself in the place of the sinner, and working out in himself the life which the sinner cannot live, which gives to his sacrifice a power perpetual and vital to touch men's hearts and change their lives.

Adelaide Procter tells the story of a young nun who was induced to run off with a soldier whom she had nursed in the hospital. When he soon betrayed and forsook her, she returned to the neighborhood of the convent, hoping to die in her shame. In the early darkness an older nun found her in the shadow of the convent wall, and told her that she might return and

take up the old life, no one being the wiser, for she herself, discovering her flight, had, in the strength of her faith in the love of Christ to bring her back, so carefully performed all her duties in her absence that she had not yet been missed. The completeness of her substituting her life for her friend's had covered her sin. What is this but a picture of Jesus Christ, not as dead, but as the living Christ, putting himself in the place of his servant, supplying his need, leading on his life, until at last he brings him, repenting and renewed, as an offering to the Father?¹

III. In the ascension we discern also a more gracious condescension of the divine love. As the writer to the Hebrews says, "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4: 15). We love to read the story of our Saviour's life; how he was born in a humble home, worked in a carpenter's shop, endured hardship from his surroundings in all those penitential years, living the life of the plainest of men. But not of that Judæan Christ, not of Jesus of Nazareth, do we think to-day. Our thoughts rise to that ascended Lord, made higher than the angels, sitting in the glories of heaven, the ineffable glory, where pure eyes do not behold iniquity, waiting for

¹ See Note 2.

the day of his triumph, when all the universe shall unite to sing pæans to his honor, yet turning aside from all to be your Saviour and mine.

You remember the old classical story, how after a great battle Alexander the Great drew up his victorious captains in long array, that he might distribute the prizes and spoils. Walking along the line, assigning the treasures to one and another, he came to Cleomenes his friend. Stepping up to him and putting his hands upon his shoulders, he simply kissed him. Now suppose instead of Cleomenes his friend, it had been Cleomenes the traitor. Suppose it were Peter, or any one of the little company that forsook Jesus and fled; suppose it were any one of the innumerable Christians saved in spite of themselves; suppose it were the profligate Augustine, or the drunken John Newton, or John Bunyan, the low, vile tinker, or Jerry McAuley, the river-thief—and Jesus Christ the Lord, in the day of his glory, has come, with that great multitude whom no man can number, bringing gifts to his own—what is to be his prize? The kiss of pardon; the smile of forgiveness; the outstretched hands of the Father of the prodigal in divine benediction; the joy among the angels of God over the sinner who repents.

All that Jesus has done, all that Jesus is as the Saviour of the world, is gathered up and made ef-

fective for us in the tender sympathy, the immediately available helpfulness of the present Christ. That is what touches hearts. "Jesus Christ loves me." When men and women say that, the new life has come.

A lady who had tried for several days in vain to make some provision for a fallen girl who desired to live a better life, stood before the girl, distressed at her failure, and distressed still more at the girl's stony hopelessness. "I told you it is no use," the girl said, and went out. Some hours after, she came back. "I could n't stand your crying," she said. The burden of the gospel is just here, to make men believe that so God loves. Patripassianism may have been a heresy, but that God is so near to us, and his love to us so real as to make his sorrow over our sins a suffering to himself, is a most persuasive truth.

IV. The ascension of the Lord opens to us also a more efficient and helpful teaching. Through the years of his earthly ministry Jesus was busy teaching his disciples. For what? For the days when he should no longer be with them. It was the teaching of the schoolmaster preparing his pupils for anticipated needs. With his resurrection and ascension all that passed away. At once they were no longer disciples at school, but sons entrusted with their Father's business—taken as it were into active part-

nership. "Ye are my witnesses." Why? Because the world is the field. It is the sphere in which my kingdom is to be established. I have chosen you and ordained you for service. Ye, beloved, are workers together with God.

Therefore the teaching that we as Christians are receiving daily from the Lord is not to be regarded as preparatory teaching to fit us for the life that heaven shall develop. It is rather partnership teaching, in which the senior partner works by the side of the junior, giving him the benefit of his larger knowledge and experience, because their interests are one; and everything the junior does is for the older, and all the wisdom and love and tenderness and strength of the older is for the junior.

The wonder of the divine salvation bursts upon us here. We have come to Jesus Christ with our hearts full of skepticism and hardness and unbelief. We have wondered how all these things could be true. We have questioned all the revelation of the past and all the teaching of the New Testament, and we have stood afar off, and have had unrest in our souls. At last the gracious love of our God has brought us one by one near to himself, until we are willing to say, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" And the answer is, "Come unto me, and thou shalt live." We venture. We have come to be will-

ing to be Christians. Very imperfect ones, often falling back, but never forsaken of the Lord Jesus Christ, doers of his will, bearers of his name. And now our eyes are lifted up, and we discover, as Paul did, that Christ is with us; that he is going to abide with us always. So we go about our business, we travel, we go to our homes, our offices; we have trial, and perplexity, and bodily pain, and the heart is rent, and the will has to be summoned, and we wonder what all God's strange providences mean; and here comes back the assurance that Jesus Christ, the living Christ, is with us every day; that we are doing his business, that we are working together with him, that he is by our side and in our hearts, and we can almost feel the touch of his hand; and we take courage, and go on.

We now understand the wonderful exhortations with which the epistle closes. Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, himself the new and living way and the great high priest over the house of God, we are to run our race and do our work. We are not alone, nor have we found a God of the thunder and tempest and darkness. We are come "unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to

God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." Therefore we cast away our feebleness, as the apostle says; we cast away our fears and uncertainties. We receive Jesus Christ as a very present help in every time of need, and putting our hand in his, proceed to live with him, as the disciples lived with him when they first forsook all that they might follow him and be with him forever.

X

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE COMING
JUDGE

“ From thence He shall come to judge
the Quick and the Dead ”

*“ Looking for the blessed hope and appearing
of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus
Christ.”*

TITUS 2 : 13.

*“ For we must all be made manifest before the
judgment-seat of Christ ; that each one may re-
ceive the things done in the body, according to
what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*

2 COR. 5 : 10.

CHAPTER X

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE COMING JUDGE

The characteristic of the Christian Church as distinct from the world about it is that it stands with expectant and upturned face, looking for that event which is to be the crown and triumph of the Christian life; whereas the world about us faces the unknown. Carlyle has stated the common thought: "We are marching forward into the mists of the future tense." There ought to be a future life; but all the world's experience and philosophy, its history and its speculation, give it only guesses as to what lies beyond the grave. Over against this stands the Church with its positive teaching and sure hope, waiting for the coming and triumph of its Lord.

There is that in us which makes it hard for us to believe that death ends all. We find a necessity for much posthumous readjustment. Without a future life, this world would be the greatest enigma, the most inconsequential existence, that the mind of man can conceive. Sin is a fact that cannot be annihilated by oblivion. Forgiveness does not undo it. Its consequences remain in our life, its memory abides in

our hearts, and unconfessed sin has a way of gripping the soul. We cannot shake it off. For this reason, however stout our denials, we cannot easily get rid of the conviction that somewhere, by and by, there is to be a judgment. Conscience never entirely sleeps, and her voice is the premonition of another Voice that will surely speak in due time. Consequently, men do startling things in spite of themselves; the obduracy of a lifetime vanishes in a moment, and the most reckless or defiant spirit stands paralyzed before its fears. Some years ago the watchman was shot at the Kaskaskia railroad bridge, in Illinois. Some one had fired, in the darkness, through the window of his little guard-house, and killed him in his chair. Several months after, a man gave himself up to the authorities, confessing the crime. He begged for trial and punishment, as a relief from the remorse he suffered. The face of his victim haunted him, he said, until he could bear it no longer. "I knew it was wrong all the time," has said more than one strong business man in my presence, in an hour of distress, concerning business methods which he had long practised or stoutly justified.

"In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 't is seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 't is not so above.
There is no shuffling; there the action lies

In his true nature; and we ourselves compelled,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence.¹"

Therefore if the salvation which God has provided as a redemption for sin is to be real, there must, sooner or later, be such a judgment as shall declare the truth and completely overcome evil. This is the explanation of the testimony of man's heart; it is the foretaste in him of what is in reserve, either of condemnation or acquittal.

As we open the Old Testament, we find that the Hebrews, although they believed in immediate retribution, personal and national, looked upon the other world, as all men had, as a world of anxiety and fear. The Old Testament everywhere presupposes another life. Death, to the Israelite, in every stage of his history, meant more than the end of earthly existence. It opened a new condition. There was to him a real though a shadowy world beyond. The fathers were there. Enoch "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." That only indicated something remarkable in the manner of Enoch's death or in the type of his piety, not that he was unique in surviving the grave. Sheol was a place of conscious existence, out of which at times a spirit might come; hence necromancy was forbidden. As revelation ad-

¹ Hamlet, Act. 3, Scene 3.

vanced, they came to know the certainty both of future punishment and of future joy. The Psalmist says (16:10, 11), "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." This widened into the resurrection view of Isaiah (26:19): "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead;" and of Daniel (12:2), "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The Jews had come to believe that at least for the chosen people a way was to be found through the darkness of the grave into the pleasant pastures of the life of God himself.

The New Testament brought life and immortality to light. Jesus came out of the other world, and, returning into it, left no doubt as to its reality or as to its essential character. Life becomes the presence and favor of God; death is separation from God. "And this is life eternal," says Jesus in his farewell prayer, "that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). "Depart from me," is the

final sentence of doom (Matt. 25:41). Thus the other life takes on the essential features of this life, and both become one. The dead are carrying forward the life they once shared with the living, shut out from them now only by the change of external conditions. They are not annihilated, and they are not unconscious. It has been left for our times to offer us feeble suggestions of an easy solution of serious ecclesiastical difficulties. But God is no more now than he ever has been a God of the dead. The Saviour's promise to the dying thief cannot be lightly swept aside; nor Paul's desire "to depart and be with Christ," and his readiness to be absent from the body that he might be "at home with the Lord." And the vision given to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews of the city of the living God, as the abode of "the spirits of just men made perfect," is as far from being accordant with a post-mortem state of unconsciousness. Annihilation, as Principal Fairbairn has said, would be a confession of failure on God's part. It is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural.

Hades, which is the Greek synonym for the Sheol of the Old Testament, is never used in the New Testament as the name of the abode of the righteous.¹ "Paradise" is the term for their home. It indicates

¹ See Note 1.

life with God. Jesus is represented as already there, and his saints are gathered and gathering around him. "For our citizenship is in heaven," says Paul; "from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Those who have reached that blessed abode know already as they are known, and having Christ, have all. Heaven, to the Christian, is, above all, home. It brings immediate reunion with those we have loved, and opens constant and satisfying occupation. It is the place where the heavenly Father spreads his table, and the Saviour fulfils his promise that if we will open to him the door, he will come in and sup with us and we with him.

But it is also the home to which the absent sons have come, being the men they are; therefore the place where they shall find the full employment of all their capacities and powers. The glories of the New Jerusalem which filled the apostle's mind in the vision of the Apocalypse, culminate in the revelation that there "his servants shall do him service." Heaven is a place of exemption from all that molests or makes afraid; it is a place of rest and joy unbounded. But that is not enough. The believer has entered his Father's house; he has become freed from earthly cares and illusions; and as a child who has finished his school life and goes home to enter his father's business and share his life, so the Christian passing

out of this life in the full possession of his powers, intellectual, moral and physical, shall find for them nobler uses than ever before.¹

Heaven is, in the thought of the believer, a place of eager expectancy. Archbishop Leighton, at the end of his long and beautiful life, commiserated by friends because of his infirmities, replied that "from the shaking of the prison doors he was led to hope that some of those brisk blows would throw them open and give him the release he coveted." He "seemed to stand tiptoe on the margin of eternity, in a delightful amazement of spirit, eagerly awaiting the summons to depart, and feeding his soul with the prospect of immortal hope and glory." "Ah, but you have great assurance," said a friend. "No, truly," he replied, "only a good hope and a great desire to see what they are doing on the other side."

The late Professor Lewis Stearns, the brilliant promise of whose opening career was so sadly cut short by his early death, writes in the closing chapter of his "Present Day Theology," upon the delights of heaven as furnishing opportunity for those who have been taken from this world in the fulness of their powers and capacity for service in God's kingdom. He pictures Eliot and Brainerd finding there the souls of their red Indians; and Moffatt and Living-

¹ See Note 2.

stone the souls of their dearly loved Africans. He little thought how soon he would join them, and together with David and Isaiah and John and Paul, plunge into the deep things of God, and find worthy employment for his own eager mind in opening to those gathered about him who have not had his training or are not possessed of his intellectual grasp, the truths he long wanted to know, now revealed in their fulness and beauty. Is not this the true opportunity, the fitting crown of any life dedicated to God and loving the service of the kingdom, that it should spend itself at last in labors which, shared with those we love, shall make demands on every faculty, and feeling the perpetual joy of gaining knowledge, shall also forever have the delight of communicating it to others?

Concerning the future state of those who die impenitent, we know little. Revelation lifts the veil but imperfectly upon their after condition. They are out of Christ and under the dominion of death, and the implication of Scripture is of fixed conditions. Probation, as we know it, involves conditions so different from any in which they can possibly be, conditions of mingled good and evil, that it is difficult to imagine how it can be found in the life beyond. We know that God is loving toward all, and not willing that any should perish, and we can be sure that at last no ac-

cusation can lie against him for not having done all that is possible to bring every soul back to himself; but we know also that now is the accepted time, and that there is a tremendous urgency upon every man that for his soul's sake, as for Christ's sake, he should repent and be converted now.¹

Out of that other life where to-day are all the dead, Christ shall come. The time of his coming we do not know. It has been much in the mind of the Church, but it would have been well if Christians had not wasted their time on idle speculations and vain readings of prophecy. Some things are clear. The kingdom of God is a growth. It has a history and a development. It requires time. The earth is to be filled with the glory of God, and the whole creation waits. God has infinite leisure and patience. We wonder at the long-suffering of God, as we wonder at the patience of Jesus, giving himself in loneliness and without visible success to a ministry which should find its fruitage on the cross. We realize that there must be some deep-lying necessity. The Church requires leading, and enlightening experience. There must be time for the slow accumulations of knowledge, and the building up of Christian character, as we know all character has to be built up, increment by increment. Growth in grace can only

¹ See Notes 3, 4, 5 and 6.

come by discipline in watchfulness and self-control. What is true of the individual must be true of the Church. The history has been what we should expect. The Church has had not only to learn by her shortcomings her dependence upon her Lord and the meaning of faith, but has had to learn the value of the pearl of great price by the labor of winning it.

One epoch ended with the destruction of Jerusalem. This was an event in itself so startling, and in our Lord's prophetic utterance was so intermingled with the end of all things, that the early Christians might naturally be confused by it into looking for the Lord's immediate return. But while they had been taught that this was a possibility, they had been warned against attempting to fix the time. By degrees the Church has learned to wait. In patience and in quiet growth, in a love like the Lord's for sinful men, the gospel is to be everywhere preached, not as a proclamation, but as the seed corn of the kingdom, which at last, with its ripened harvest of noble lives and perfected civilization, shall be the witness to what the Lord has wrought, and the fitting reward of his sacrifice.¹

One difficult passage in Revelation (20: 1-10) has led some excellent people to believe that Christ is coming to reign for a thousand years upon the earth,

¹ See Note 7.

after which the powers of evil are to be again let loose preparatory to a second resurrection. If the passage is to be interpreted literally, it is in harmony with nothing else in the Bible; and experience teaches that such literal interpretation has given rise to fanaticism and excess. Augustine long ago suggested that the passage applies to the age in which we are living, in which Christ does dwell with his people, giving them power to do his work. But be that as it may, the method of the growth of the kingdom seems to be established. In time the heathen world is to be taken for Christ; the kings of the earth are to bring their tribute and their glory into it; the Church is to be tempted and tried continually, and doubtless never to pass beyond the necessity of that discipline of trial and sorrow and failure which plays so large a part in our individual growth into the likeness of Christ.

Finally, as the thief comes in the night, and as the flood came in the days of Noah, when men were buying and selling, and the business of life was going on, the Lord shall come. Every eye shall see him. The dead shall be there; all witnessing to his triumph, assenting to his judgment. The righteous God will be seen to have done righteously. The loving God will be seen to have done all that divine love could do for the saving of the world. And the Father will be recognized as gathering every child that will come, to

himself. It will be the day of declaration. The days of probation are past. The Lord gathers his own. There shall be fulness of joy. Then shall be known what is the life and immortality which have been brought to light through the gospel; and Jesus and his redemption will be seen to be the center and crown of all God's work in the universe.¹

So this vision of the coming Christ becomes the test of daily service. That the Christian shall be willing to work wherever God puts him; that he shall not measure his service by visible gain; that he shall leave results to his Master, being content to do his work; that he shall be characterized by a restful spirit, serene, confident, as one who knows his service and his reward; that he shall not be content to build up his own life, but give his strength to bringing in the kingdom in the hearts and lives of others—is properly required of one who knows that his Lord is coming, and who has always before him the thought of that glad day. The test of the Church is that it has its face ever turned outward and upward, not finding its joy in the oneness with which its members draw near to each other, but the eagerness with which they turn to daily life with its opportunities for helpful service, and to the future for the coming triumph of their Lord. "The Lord make you to increase and abound

¹ See Note 8.

in love one toward another, and toward all men . . . to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3: 12, 13), is the first recorded prayer of the early Church. As that prayer is answered and the individual heart is established in the truth of Jesus, we are permitted to see Christian after Christian, as the summons comes to go home, and the bodily powers fail, and the eyes close their earthly vision, have given to them the vision granted the beloved disciple; and again the glories of the evening sunlight melt into the glories of the new day, the purple, the amaranth and the gold of the horizon becoming anew the radiance from the towers of the celestial city; and as the voices of earth fade from the dull ears, the voices of loved ones beyond are heard again; and the Lord himself walks with his child through the portals of his Father's house. Adoringly we sing, "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge;" and unitedly we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."



XI

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE HOLY GHOST

“I believe in the Holy Ghost”

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.”

JOHN 16: 7.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, . . . by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”

ROMANS 15: 30.

CHAPTER XI

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE HOLY GHOST

It is significant that this simple affirmation of the Creed has contented the Church concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Here there is no complication. "He shall not speak from himself," said Jesus; "but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." In the divine economy, the Holy Spirit has come as the indwelling God; to abide in the Church by living in the heart and life of the believer. How real this abiding presence was to be, and how he was to supplement, and, we might almost say, supersede, the presence of the Lord himself, is shown by the manner in which our Lord introduced him. In that solemn hour, the climax of his ministry, when all that is in our Lord's heart gathers itself up and finds expression in his farewell words, he turns to his distressed disciples and says, There is no harm in this. It falls in with the eternal purpose by which not only the world is to be redeemed from sin, but in which the infinite love of the Father himself is manifest. "I tell you the

truth"—as if to reaffirm the statement which they should never thereafter forget—"for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." He says little of the world of spirit into which he is going, except to affirm its reality; but he makes what he means to be a substantial promise to his disciples in this hour of their great need. The relation in which he has stood to them is testimony to the comprehensiveness of the promise. They had become conscious that he was sustained by another presence than that of men. Matthew speaks of him as "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (4:1). Luke describes him as returning "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." The disciples, even at that time, though they knew nothing of the meaning of the promise of the Spirit, were conscious that Jesus was overshadowed by that direct, divine revelation of him, and that his whole ministry was in obedience to it; so that the Lord, speaking of himself, asserts that he casts out devils by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). And when, years after, the New Testament books came to be written, we find all that our Saviour did and suffered attributed to the guidance of this same Spirit of God in him. In Acts we read that "through the Holy Ghost" he gave commandment (1:2); and that God anointed him with "the Holy

Ghost and with power" (10:38); in Hebrews, that he offered himself as a sacrifice "through the eternal Spirit" (9:14); in Romans, that it was the Spirit of God that raised him up from the dead (8:11); and in 1 Timothy that he was justified "in the spirit" (3:16). Again in Romans he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness" (1:4). His whole life was a realized possession of the Holy Spirit.

In the consciousness of this presence that had been with him from the beginning, Jesus makes this promise to the disciples. It is not conceivable that he would make a promise to their ear and break it to their heart, or that in this supreme hour, so soon after he had been weeping by the grave of one he loved, and knowing that they would soon be weeping at his grave, he should deceive them. That abiding presence of God, which the Church was to know as the Holy Spirit, was to be the more than sufficient substitute for the visible Christ.

When we turn to the life of the apostles, we find that the Holy Spirit takes very much the same position towards them and their work that the Lord had taken. "I will send you the Comforter," he said. The word is often given untranslated, *Paraclete*, but that is not so easily understood. The Latin word from which our word *advocate* comes, is used

sometimes as a substitute. It is the equivalent of the Greek, and means one called to our side. We have then the Paraclete, the Advocate, the Comforter. That same Holy Ghost who was promised by our Lord when he departed is promised to any sinner who follows Christ. Even such a one, taken in the evil hour of transgression, if he turns towards God, will find that he has there One who stands for another, but one who is called to us, one who comes summoned by our need, and makes all our circumstances his own, who brings his knowledge and skill and care to it, and does in us and for us all that our need may require. So he "comforts" us. The Greek poet Æschylus says that the night before a certain battle, when the little Greek fleet found itself shut in a harbor by the great Persian fleet outside, the Greek captains went from ship to ship, "paracleting" their men—that is, putting new courage into them; heartening them, we might almost say. Their captains were men who did not wait to be called, but came with comfort of the kind that gives strength. And the result was that in the morning the fleet was full of courage, and went out to victory. The Persian fleet was destroyed.¹

Jesus meant much more when he used that word. He says nothing of the temple, or the priesthood, or

¹ See Note 1.

the sacrifice, or the Sabbath, but everything of the indwelling Spirit, as the source of enduring strength for his disciples. Conviction of sin and of righteousness and of judgment is to be wrought in their hearts and in the world about them; the work of Christ is to be made finally effective for the bringing in of the kingdom of God into the world; his life and sacrifice are to be vindicated and made the central and radiant truth in all the revelation of God to men; and it is to be done by the Spirit. "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." The future is all his. There is to be no further revelation of God until Jesus shall come in his glory. The stage in the unfolding of the kingdom of God which embraces the rise, progress, and final triumph of the Church of God on the earth, is to be the era of the Holy Spirit.¹

Jesus' own confidence in the promise he was making is shown in that he took no pains to leave any records of his own work or words. We rarely feel safe without a writing; we want written record of every important word. The wonder is that when Jesus turned to these poor Galilæan fishermen who were forsaking all for him, and committed his cause to them, he showed no concern. They, in turn, seem quickly to have caught his spirit, and to have been convinced of the sufficiency of his provision. When

¹ See Note 2.

dragged before officers and courts to give account of themselves, we never find them producing documents or summoning witnesses. Their testimony is always concerning things they know—things witnessed to their spirits by the Spirit of God.

Peter speaks because he is “filled with the Holy Ghost,” and men wonder at his calm courage, for they perceive that he is an “unlearned and ignorant” man (Acts 4:8,13). Paul declares that God has given him “the earnest of the Spirit” in his heart (2 Cor. 1:22). It is that kind of a pledge which is a part of the thing itself. He uses a commercial term meaning a first instalment. He is not a man possessed with an idea, or caught up in an ecstasy. He appeals directly to the visible facts. He says we Christians show fruits; and he does not hesitate to catalogue the fruits of the Spirit, that every man may judge for himself as to the claim of the disciples to have a new life from God.

In an age when all documents were verified by a seal, confirming the fixed and permanent will of the maker of the document, even after death, the apostles did not hesitate to use so bold a figure as that, and to say, “Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13). Our Lord Jesus Christ whom you see no more and we see no more, stamped his eternal truth, as with his signet, on our hearts. His Spirit

dwells in us, forever revealing his will. He goes further—life itself is the gift of the Spirit. “He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8: 11). Even now this poor body, with the mortality still upon it, yielding daily to the pressure of advancing years, and the burden of life, is the “temple of God” (1 Cor. 3: 16). To grasp the meaning of this we must put ourselves back in Paul’s time. Imagine yourself standing amid the splendid edifices of an ancient city, proud, as Athens was of the Parthenon, or Ephesus of the temple of Diana, and hear the apostle say, “We Christians care nothing for temples. Our bodies are the temple of God, for the Spirit of God dwells in us.”

The apostle John at a later day gives a similar testimony. “We know,” he says, “that the Son of God is come.” “We know that he abideth in us.” “We know that we are of God.” How? “By the Spirit which he gave us” (1 John 3: 24). A half century or more before, Jesus had bidden his disciples farewell, saying, “Lo, I am with you alway.” Now John, an old man, looking back over the vicissitudes of those eventful years, finds his mind filled with this single thought. He has told his story of Jesus, he has borne his testimony to those transcendent events of long ago. But what is that? He adds,

“To me that story, aye, that Life and Death
 Of which I wrote ‘It was,’—to me it is;
 Is here and now; I apprehend nought else.
 Love, wrong and pain, what see I else around?”

The indwelling Christ was to him everything.

Here is the summons to us. “I believe in the Holy Ghost” is the quiet affirmation of the Church; not in the Holy Ghost as the exceptional possession of the sanctified few. The Church has strenuously set itself against the claims of individuals or groups who claim to have a larger revelation of God than is given to others. This claim always savors of fanaticism and breeds hypocrisy and confusion. The Spirit brings no new revelation. He takes the things of Christ, the common possession of all, and gives life and meaning to them. Thereupon the Church applies this test to the man who claims to have more of the Spirit of God than his fellows: Does he know more of Christ? Is he more like Christ, with more of the spirit of Christ, and the humbleness of Christ? If so, then we accept the revelation of the Spirit in him; otherwise not.

The Church will never accept, for instance, Gibbon’s accounting for the spread of Christianity by the conjunction of favorable conditions, such as the crumbling of the Roman empire, the decay of heathenism, the corruption of public morals, the wide

diffusion of the Greek language. It will not consent to seek the signs of its own progress to-day in its numbers, or wealth, or social position, or complex organization, or great intelligence, or eloquence. Not by might of man or wisdom of man is its confession; but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and, only so, of power. All else is as the chaff of the threshing floor, the small dust of the balance. The one source of life for itself, and of power in the world over which the victory is to be won, is in the possession of the Holy Ghost as an actual presence in the heart of every believer.

This presence is certified not by the discovery of new and startling truth, nor by power to do unexpected things, but by the awakening of a tenderer love, a more vivid apprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a more eager devotion to him. Where there is most gentleness and most self-forgetfulness, where most of willingness to take up one's cross daily and walk in the steps of Jesus, there, from the beginning, the Church has been taught, is the most of possession of the Spirit. And where that is, God is; and where God is, there is triumph.

This, then, is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. God has not given his Spirit by measure. The gift is not because a man has great intellect, or great popularity, or great talents. Sometimes among the rarely gifted,

but far oftener among the lowly, who, in patient continuance in well doing, in circumstances of toil and trial and pain and unselfish devotion to others, meet daily duty in the humblest conditions of life, are produced, with uncomplaining, steadfast faith, the fruits of the Spirit which mark the fulness of the life from God.

The work of the Spirit is before all to convince the believer of the truth of God. It is that conviction of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, of which the Saviour spoke, which lies at the foundation of the assurance of one's own salvation. Christianity is a life, the life of Jesus realized by a man who is a sinner. Christianity is also a temple built of such lives wrought into one another as parts of one whole. It is not a doctrine, or any system of teaching or philosophy. To be a Christian is to yield oneself to Christ, *i.e.*, not setting up one's own aims, or seeking one's own pleasures, but finding the joy and crown of one's life in knowing that we are accepted of Jesus Christ, and are being used of him to spread his name in the world.¹

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," is the Lord's voice through the prophet Isaiah. "Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem," he adds. The voices of men speak to the ear. How often they fail to reach

¹ See Note 3.

the heart! And when they do, how often the heart is betrayed by the voice that comes to the ear! In the day of Israel's desolation, when her privileges were taken away, and the darkness of despair had settled upon her spirit, the cry of the prophet was for a voice from God to her heart.

The answer to that prayer is the gift of the Holy Spirit speaking in your heart and mine in the hour of temptation and sorrow, when the world wearies our ear with its confusion of voices, its warring of philosophies and creeds and guesses, until one knows not what to believe. It is the Spirit who comes in such hours to witness with our spirits that we are children of God. Jesus himself draws near, and the humble, penitent soul finds himself safe in the Father's love. He first moves us to say, "I will arise and go to my Father;" then he gives to us the assurance that we are received.¹

The Spirit also convinces the world that the faith of the believer is genuine. This is the great, completing work of the Spirit. He brings the sinner into acceptance with God, and then uses his testimony for the winning of the world. What more amazing, what more irrational than that a few Galilæan peasants should be set to the task of propagating a faith that was to turn the world upside down! Yet the world

¹ See Note 4.

flocked to baptism. Why? Because the Holy Spirit wrought in those humble men to speak the things that they knew of Christ, and to live lives like Christ's. "We do not speak great things, but we live them," was the noble boast of the early bishop. This was the testimony that could not be gainsaid. What is it that draws men to Christ to-day? Not our noble buildings, nor our beautiful music, nor the splendor of our ritual, nor the greatness of the Christian Church in its organized life, its charities or its missions. These are not what turn men from sin to righteousness. Rather it is the conviction that the men and women with whom they come in contact have a different spirit and are living a different life from themselves. "It is not your preaching nor anything you have said to me," answered a distinguished judge who, in a little New England town, offered himself as a candidate for admission to the church, "that has brought me to this, sweeping away my lifelong infidelity. It was simply the life of my neighbor, Deacon ——."

"If only such a saintly man as that can go to heaven, there is no hope for me," cried a business man, convicted of the Spirit, after having spent an evening by chance in an inn with the saintly Archbishop Leighton.

"Mamma, I know the teacher I have now in Sun-

day-school is a Christian," said a little girl to her mother. "Why, my dear?" "Because I see it in her face."

"He shall not speak from himself," was the declaration. The Holy Spirit takes the witness of the true believer and stamps it upon the heart of the infidel, of the man of the world, of the child.

We believers have covenanted with God that we will witness to Christ. We will be the open channels through which the Holy Spirit may take the things of Jesus to those about us who do not know him—the husband, the wife, the child, the friend. That means that we will be very watchful of our temper, very watchful of our faultfinding, of our captiousness, of our selfishness, of our doings in business, of our social habits, of our pride, lest all unconsciously we depart from Jesus Christ, and grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, lest all unconsciously but effectively we resist his holy impulses to bend us to his will. We have covenanted to live so that the Holy Ghost can witness to the world of the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God, of his atoning sacrifice, and of his blessed ministry to the sick and the suffering, the profligate, the outcast and the leper; that men may know that he is able to save unto the uttermost. Through us men are to know the meaning of his sacrificial death, of his opening for them the kingdom of heaven in his

resurrection, of the certainty of his coming again with the blessed dead, and of his final triumph. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit, first in the heart of the believer, and then through him in the world.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." Apart from him there is no Christianity, for there is no Christ. Well may we say with the apostle: "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these [and these only] are sons of God."¹

¹ See Note 5.

XII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE
CHURCH

“The Holy Catholic Church ”

“ Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

REV. 21: 9.

CHAPTER XII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE CHURCH

We have here a theme of surpassing interest. We are to consider how the most splendid conception ever given to the mind of men, the conception which taxed and mastered the thought of Paul, which for John changed the glories of the setting sun into the glories of the New Jerusalem—how this conception of the Church as “the bride, the wife of the Lamb,” as “his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all,” the actualized kingdom of heaven on earth, has become the Church of to-day, broken into fragments, the disjected members of the Church of Jesus Christ, exalting half truths, and, in its divisions and strifes, dishonored and ashamed. Or rather, through the broken parts of the Church of to-day we are to look back upon the original conception, to convince ourselves that it still exists.

“The Holy Catholic Church” cannot mean any one body of believers, however large; because, as Principal Fairbairn has said, it is not “holy,” for it contains many unworthy members; it is not “catholic,” for at most it is Roman; and it is not “apostolic,” for the

apostles left no successors; and any claim to succession that excludes other believers lacks the first essential of genuineness. Moreover, it has "exchanged the ministry of service for the functions of empire." When we say "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," we seek to lift ourselves at once to consider something nowhere to be seen, for faith has to do with the unseen. Corrupted, torn, defiled, put to base uses, the Church has nevertheless been the living power of Christ in the hearts of men, molding and shaping the world as it has come under the dominion of Jesus Christ, as the soul molds and shapes the natural elements which go to make up the human body. What, then, do we mean when we speak, as the Church has always spoken in the past, of "the Holy Catholic Church"?

Our word *Church* is from the Greek, *Kurios*, Lord. It is suggestive of an earlier origin of our English Christianity than that coming from Rome, or, at least, of a strong stream of Christian influence early coming from the East, perhaps through central Europe, reaching the distant and savage English shores, and giving to us the name that, while forever defining the Church as a body of people belonging to the Lord, is also a memorial of Oriental missionary zeal.

The New Testament term is *ecclesia*. In Greek usage it was the name for the assembly of the en-

franchised or qualified citizens met to transact the business of the city. In the Greek translations of the Old Testament, it was chosen to render the Hebrew term for the congregation of Israel. It was ready, therefore, for Matthew's rendering of our Lord's words, when, in the conversation with his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, he says, "Upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus applies it to a local body of believers. In the few words he utters he says two or three very definite things concerning them. He says nothing of the sacraments, nothing of anything which shall divide them from any other believers of any age; but he speaks of the Church as a body of Christian people, his disciples and witnesses, in whom God's righteousness is to be revealed in pure and upright lives, and who represent on the earth his coming kingdom, which their labors and testimony shall bring in. To them he gave the keys of the kingdom.¹

Here, then, we have what may be called the charter of the Church. Back of it, as a little group gathered about the person of the Lord, lay the larger conception of the kingdom of God for the world. In fact, that term is used in the Gospels one hundred and twelve times, while the term church is used only twice. The new idea that Jesus announced was of God as no longer tribal, but for the world—caring for all, and

¹ See Note 1.

accessible to all, apart from their becoming Jews. This conception of God Jesus embodied in a new religion, and established it in a new society which realized the brotherhood of man no less than the fatherhood of God. This is the true meaning of the term "Catholic" as applied to the Church. It denotes a Church, in the fullest sense, for all men.¹

As we follow the New Testament, we find that the ecclesia, or Church, unfolds along the lines that Jesus laid down. He defined it and its methods in the parables of the kingdom. It is as seed sown in all soils. It begins small; it grows intermingled with tares; it is to be sought as hid treasure; it is of heaven, not of earth—having standards of its own; it is present, and may be entered now; it is essentially moral and spiritual; it begins in doing the will of God on earth; it is open to men of all conditions; it encounters persecution, and fails often of appreciation; but God is in it, and it will bring great reward.

There is no emphasis upon official functions. There is diversity of gifts, and variety of opportunity. The pounds were one to each, but one gains ten, another five; and the talents are variously distributed at the beginning. There is emphasis only upon the fact of personal responsibility, and upon the obligation to bear much fruit. The kingdom has life

¹ See Note 2.

from God. The rule of its growth is to work out the life of Christ among men; and he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It is the faith of Jesus, it is true, but not so much a doctrinal as a living faith, a faith revealing itself in the life. It is noticeable that John in his gospel never uses the noun faith, but always some form of the verb to believe. He knows nothing of faith as a completed or stereotyped affair that could be branded and passed on from hand to hand. It is to him always a life, always the thought of a man having Christ in his heart, and doing his best to realize Christ and reveal Christ in all that he is and does.¹

We look in vain in the New Testament for any suggestion of a priest, or a priesthood, as an officer, or a function of the Church. We find neither the term nor the thought. Christ alone bears that name; men may variously serve his cause but none are priests. There is no earthly treasury of grace, and no authorized or exclusive means for distributing it. God is the source of all grace, and through the mediatory work of Christ, every one who will has access to him. The Church is a herald, summoning all men everywhere to come to him and live.²

The Church is a kingdom, but as it is without a priesthood, so it is without rulers. It has no political

¹ See Notes 3 and 4.

² Note 5.

or official framework. There is no suggestion of a possession, whether by tradition or ceremonies or historic position, which shall separate one body of believers from another; still less any priority which shall give to one superiority over another, however they differ in age or condition. They are as children in a father's house. They are called to serve according to their several gifts and the common need; but always as brethren, and not as rulers over the Lord's heritage. He who would be greatest of all is to be servant of all. That remains the abiding test of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. Is it bending all its energies to find opportunities to minister to men; or is it seeking principally to be ministered unto?

In its diversity there is unity; unity in origin, in spirit, in oneness of life; unity in variety of occupation as of gifts; oneness of final reward and acceptance. Nothing is more notable than the way in which the Church has been free to adapt itself to existing conditions, and the boldness with which it has laid hold of and applied to its own uses whatever it has found ready to its hand in the society about it. Whether in the Jewish synagogue or the Greek town council, in the Roman jurisprudence or the modern business world, wherever it has discovered an office or a method that promised usefulness, it has not hesitated to adopt it. From the first diaconate to the last mis-

sionary board, it has aimed at the highest and most businesslike efficiency. Its function is to promote piety, but also to see that piety shall be practical.

It is to be known by its fruits. And what are they? Not numbers, not wealth, not dominion, not a place among the powers of the earth, but the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance—all that which the Lord Jesus Christ works in and through the man who gives himself humbly and truly to him. "The kingdom of God," says the Scripture, "is not eating and drinking;" not the things that pertain to the body and can be paid for in the market; not costly edifices, nor gorgeous ceremonials; not splendid music, nor highly developed organization, things which appeal to the passions and pride of men; "not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." This is the conception of the Church of God on earth. It is visible, but not by sight; always a vision given by God.

This is the conception as it unfolds in the great epistles of Paul. The Church, at first a definite, local body, standing alone and administering its own affairs, has taken on a larger form. It has advanced, as has been said, from a unity like that of the Church at Jerusalem to a unity like that of the Church in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It has become the whole

company of believers, with one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and an infinite variety of gifts and service. Paul faces the great continent of Europe, already come to be the center of the old struggle for dominion among the endless diversities of national and individual life. The bride of Christ, whom He loves and cherishes as part of himself, is there to find her home; under many forms and conditions, each member contributing its part, she is to do her work and make known her Lord, until there shall be a glorious communion, a fulfilment of the Saviour's prayers and promise, that they shall be one with him; and the mystery hidden from the ages shall through her be made known to other worlds than ours. Principalities and powers in the heavenly places shall through her have revealed to them the manifold wisdom of God. This is the real Church of God.¹

The Church, in this large sense catholic, knows no special polity, holds to no special forms and ceremonies, is distinguished by no special orders, and is in no sense, from beginning to end, sacerdotal. It ignores and rejects forever the term priest, except as it belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and man, who, having offered himself once for all, has provided access for whosoever will to the throne of grace.

¹ See Note 6.

"Where Christ is," said the old Father, "there is the Church." *Ubi Christus ibi ecclesia.*" It is as if he had said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The Christian ministry springs from the Christian Church, and not the Christian Church from the Christian ministry. The claim of a divine right for the clergy is no better than the claim of a divine right for kings. The center of administration, the source of power and life, is to be sought in the company of believers, who determine the service, and elect or appoint, under the guidance of the Spirit, their own leaders, and recognize that they can never delegate to any man their personal responsibility to the living Christ, whose they are and whom they serve.

How did the Church ever lose such a priceless possession—the single teaching of the Saviour, the all-compelling thought in the mind of the great apostle, the one shaping and comforting and sustaining factor in the life of the early Christians, as they gave themselves for the name and sake of Jesus to the lions or to the executioner's sword? As civilization fell to pieces in the changing of the old world into the new, when Rome went down before the barbarians, her heart eaten out by her own vices, her force destroyed by her selfish rivalries, a change came upon the Church. All things human were seen tumbling into

hopeless ruin. One organization stood untouched—an organization which had laid its hand upon the emperor on his throne, and spread itself among all classes in all the world. What more natural, as Dr. Hatch says, than that it became in the eyes of men the only hope of the world? Its organization, its ecclesiastical forces and dominance, in their despairing thought, were given of God to take the place of the crumbling civil society. It became to them the visible realization of that kingdom of God which Jesus had preached. In the metaphors of the religious writers, the confederation of Christian churches was "the city of God," the "body of Christ," the "Holy Catholic Church." They saw in it the fulfilment of the ancient types. It was the paradise in which men walked with God, the ark of Noah in which the redeemed were rescued, the temple of Solomon where God dwelt, the New Jerusalem, the widow's unfailing cruse. Men said, The tabernacle of God has come down to abide with men. The State had given validity to the decrees of the Church, and now the Church as a vast, organized confederation, survived the State. It assumed universal authority, and it interpreted the unity taught in the Scriptures to mean unity of organization. The unity of a common ideal and a common type gave place to the enforced unity of belief, and then, of order. The simple creed

of primitive days was lost in the maze of theological speculation, and in its place the Church created new standards of authoritative dogma. Acceptance of these and membership in the organization became the condition of salvation. A man, as Augustine said, might possess all the virtues, but if he was what the Church pronounced heretical, he was outside the kingdom of God. The Church became a world organization, with Byzantium and Rome in turn its center. What was the result? Men assented to Christian ideas without having in their heart Christian enthusiasm. The Spirit of Christ was superseded by the machinery of the Church. And with that exchange of the Spirit for machinery, the life of the Church expired.

Then came long centuries of darkness. But because the Lord had lost silver, he did not suffer the candle to be put out. At last came the upheaval of the great Reformation. The world had lost the vision of the true Christ in the domination of the embodied Church—the Church that brought the emperor a suppliant to the feet of the pope, and issued its mandates of life and death to the world.¹ Men turned for light and peace to the open Word. Through this, translated into the language of the common people, the old vision began to reappear. Men said, “We belong to

¹ See Note 7.

the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rome may excommunicate us, it may sever us from itself, but it cannot sever us from God, nor from those who with us gather about his open Word." Then began to spring up various groups of believers, as in the past three hundred years, striving together with such light as they have, often with sharp antagonisms and much yielding to the world and the flesh, yet striving together to get back to that conception of the kingdom of God, the Church invisible, holy, universal, ever known to the Father, ever doing his will, at last to be recognized by the King in his glory, which the Lord had given the world at the beginning.

We ask to-day, How is this vision—a vision, but the truth—to be realized? How are we ever to re-establish the original conception? Not by adjustments of machinery, and not by compromises. It has been pointed out that there are certain metals so refractory that they cannot be altered or dealt with except when they are subjected to the intensest heat; then they flow and fuse. So, not the heat of controversy, but the heat of hearts that are aflame with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the fire by which the hardness and perversities of the visible Church are to be melted, and the divided life of the Christian community is to be reunited into the oneness which

shall witness to the world of that body with many members of which Jesus Christ is the head.¹

The need to-day is great, but it contains in itself the prophecy of the future. Christianity is a life, and life is its own vindication. It will perpetuate and renew itself. The divisions and distractions of Christendom foretell the reunion. Because men are driven to cry for more of Christ, Christ will come. As God made the world at the beginning for man, so by his Spirit he has made the Church. It was a work great enough for God. It is not enough, therefore, for a man to be joined in heart to Christ; he will be joined to other believers in the Church. They are covenanted together for a definite service, a service that shall be a daily and costly burden of toil and sacrifice. If the Christian has not the marks of Christ as stigmata on his hands, he will, like Simon, have the cross of Christ on his back. He gives himself up as a helper to Him who still carries the sins of the world. In so doing he is in union with the saints of every age, he realizes the Church universal, not by his confession but by his service. In what he does for his brother whom he sees, he proves his love for his Lord whom he does not see.²

The question for every man, then, is not, "Am I an Episcopal, or a Roman Catholic, or a Presbyterian, or

¹ See Note 8.

² Note 9.

a Congregational Christian?" but, "Am I a member of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I joined indeed to the Church universal, which knows its Lord and is known of him?" Think of the loneliness of the man who, in the day of the Lord's coming, when this glorious conception of the meaning of human life, of the meaning of God himself, of the meaning of the kingdom and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall cease to be a dream and shall become a visible reality—think of the loneliness of the man who in that day shall find himself outside; having no place in its life because there has been no place in him for its Head; having no right to a name in the Lamb's book of life, because he has never been willing to accept the forgiveness purchased by the Lamb's blood or to give his name to Jesus Christ for his service! So long as there is power in any group of believers to win souls from darkness to light, so long the kingdom of God is to be seen among men; so long the old miracle of redemption is witnessing to itself. Men are changed from death into life because the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and among the children of God. He uses their words to carry God's message; he uses their efforts to do God's work; he uses their example to lead men to desire Jesus Christ; he uses their prayers to bring down a renewing life from God upon stony hearts and worldly lives. Then men arise and

say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" And, behold! the tabernacle of God is with men; the kingdom of heaven is here! To us is given the privilege of hastening and shaping its unfolding until it shall constitute a communion as wide as human life, and as deep as human need, with a brotherhood that shall spring from fellowship with one Spirit, and faith in one Lord.¹

¹ See Note 10.



XIII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE HEAVENLY
HOME

“The Communion of Saints”

“Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.”

HEBREWS 12:22-24.

CHAPTER XIII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE HEAVENLY HOME

Somewhere in Eastern Europe a young Slavic orator delivered recently an address on a theme so notable as to lead the wisest and most experienced American in the Orient, President Washburn, of Robert College, to make it the text of an important article. His theme was this: The failure of the Latin and Teutonic races to fulfil their trust in the civilization of the world. They have done great things in the way of literature, art and science, and very much for the individual man; but they have failed in that they have not upheld the great truths committed to them; they have exalted the material above the spiritual, and have made a god of Mammon. We are not concerned with his inference that the day of the Slavonic race has come, but we accept the testimony to the importance of the business we have in hand. We are dealing with just these great truths which have been committed to us by God, and which are essential to human progress. Lose them, and what avails all the pomp of natural resources; what bulwark is there in the bigness of your business, or the

amount of bullion in your banks, against the inevitable shame and the loss irreparable? The spirit in man must live, and great truths alone can feed the soul. If as a nation or as individuals we betray this trust, or grow indifferent to the truth given us from God, our end is near, and we deserve to be swept aside.

Men lightly read the Apostles' Creed, and deem this affirmation of the communion of saints so much verbiage, a mere synonym of belief in the Church. But what is its history, and what does it mean?

It was not universal in the creeds of the Western Church until the eighth century, though it is found in one obscure Confession as early as the sixth. It belongs to a time of transition. The eastern empire had gone down before the advancing power of the Mohammedan, and the anticipations of the new empire that was to arise under Charlemagne, following the turning back of the Saracens at Tours, stirred men to believe in the continued life of the divine society. It was a new nativity. A new world was opening, with its center not in the East but in the West. The gospel of Christ had found its way among the Germans, and God was using the warlike Franks to save his Church. After all, what did it matter who sowed or who reaped? Are not the saints of God one? Are they not heirs of all the past?

Is not the future all theirs, whether they be in earth or in heaven? The pagan Huns believed that their ancestors fought their battle in the sky, as they waged their bloody contest on the earth below; and shall not Christians affirm their faith in the oneness of their Christian life? The glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, are to the believer not things of the past, but the blessed reality of the present. He is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, not as remote and unconcerned spectators, but as sharers of their honors with him, and eager participants in his struggles and victories.¹

This was the Christian revelation.

In the hour of Jesus' weakness, angels came and ministered unto him. When the shadow of the cross rested darkly upon him, he ascended the mount of Transfiguration, not simply to draw more closely to himself and to pledge to a more devoted service the chosen disciples, nor only to hear the divine word, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," but also to have witness of the communion of saints, as he held converse with Moses and Elijah. The promise of his own perpetual presence and active co-operation in their coming service was his parting consolation to the sorrowing disciples.

¹ See Note 1.

Christians at once entered into this truth. Stephen under the storm of blows looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, pledge of the home that was awaiting him with the saints of God. Paul writes his earliest epistle to assure the mourning brethren in Thessalonica that their beloved dead have not vanished into Hades, the hopeless realm of disembodied spirits, but are in blessed possession of their eternal inheritance, and will be no whit behind their surviving friends at the coming of the Lord. For himself he is always as a combatant in the amphitheater, so conscious is he of the onlooking saints, to whom he and the Church he loves are doing distinguished service in making known so much of the mystery of Christ as is being revealed through their sufferings and triumphs. The anonymous writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us the same vision, as to his illumined eyes, and later to those of the apostle John, the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven was seen as the heavenly Jerusalem already established, the present home of just men made perfect, in the city of the living God.

Not by chance do they speak of a city. At the word we think of a place where humanity is packed under distressing conditions, where great buildings

shut out the sunlight, where palaces back up against tenements, and beautiful avenues lead down to filthy alleys, where the struggle of life is at its fiercest, where power tramples upon helplessness, and luxury and riches jostle starvation and despair. But the Greek *polis* and the Latin *civitas* meant, not a place, but a community, an aggregation of people of one stock and one speech, possessing common traditions, animated by common aims, uniting in a common worship, sharing a common life; just as *politics*, "politike," to the Greek meant not a scheme for the adroit manipulation of the machinery of the State in the interest of a party, or to maintain the corrupt control of a "boss," but the art of so ordering the affairs of a community as to promote the highest welfare of all. Not carelessly did the apostle John write, "I saw the holy city."¹

Whether we read Ephesians 3:15, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"; or, as it is in the Revision, "every family," the truth is the same. Christians, living and dead, are joined in one fatherhood, they belong to the one household of faith. Here is the first great truth of the Creed. We are one with the saints, joint heirs with Christ in the inheritance of the Father. Our life reaches up to theirs. The blessed dead who have passed out of our homes

¹ See Note 2.

are now with them. We are separated as the members of a family separate for the duties of the day; one at the office, others at school, still others busy in the labors of the home, all to reassemble at the close of the day, bringing something of achievement, something of larger life, for all to share. Which shall contribute the most at the last home-coming, those who are now beyond, or those who tarry here, who shall say? We know that "we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep;" we may well believe also that they have suffered no lack in the new opportunities and privileged service of the other world. If Moses and Elijah had much to see and hear on the mount of Transfiguration of the wonders of the sacrificial redemption that Jesus was accomplishing on earth, beyond question they had much also to narrate of the sweep of its effect among the angels of God, and not a little of what it meant to them in personal blessing. If "these things" "angels desire to look into," as St. Peter tells us, it is surely from more than idle curiosity. And as for the saints, we know from Hebrews 11: 39, 40 that "these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."¹

¹ See Note 3.

True friendship stands, as Goethe said, on something firmer than oneness of occupation and circumstance, or even similarity of tastes. Sitting on the same bench at school, sharing the same sports, pursuing the same studies, greeting each other daily as neighbors, membership in the same club, these are all external and trivial. Friendship becomes worthy of the name where there is some oneness of inner life. It reaches its highest and noblest intensity where men are joined in the grasp of their religious convictions. Religious faith, in proportion as it is deep and genuine, takes possession of a man's entire being, therefore there is nothing left to stand in the way of perfect sympathy of his heart with the heart of his friend who is possessed of the same true faith. The one Lord and the one faith, the one hope of the world to come, and the one blessed experience of sins forgiven, make the "one heart and soul" of those who love the Saviour. For them death has lost its sting, and the grave its victory. Though all else perish, love shall endure. Now and forever, hearts united in Christ are one with him and with each other.¹

So the truth before us reaches out horizontally as well. It extends into the heavens, it also embraces the whole earth. Our fellow men are of the same

¹ See Note 4.

brotherhood as ourselves. This was the truth Jesus came to proclaim, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Not for the Jews, not for saints, but for the world, Christ was to die. The gospel was to be preached to all, for all have the same need, and are to be saved, if at all, by the same method. It was a thought new among men. According to Professor Max Müller no hint of it exists in antiquity, not in Egypt or Babylon or Assyria, until the third century B. C., when at a Buddhist council under king Asoka, the idea of conquering other nations, not by force of arms but by the power of truth, was promulgated. A resolution was adopted to send missionaries to all neighboring nations to spread the new gospel of Buddha. It presupposed a new conception of the world. It announced for the first time the belief that the different nations of the world, however separated by language, religion, color and custom, form nevertheless one family; that each of the members is responsible for the rest, that humanity, in fact, is not an empty word.

This is the truth Christianity proclaimed and saved. "Go ye into all the world," is its message, because it knows that of all men disciples can be made. "Ye all are one man in Christ Jesus," is the startling message; and it proceeds at once to exhibit the proof, as it points to men of every kindred and nation and

clime sitting together in heavenly places. On the day of Pentecost every man heard the message spoken in his own tongue, and very soon the Ethiopian ambassador and the Roman centurion were seen taking their places in the same brotherhood that received Stephen and Paul.

The affirmation, "I believe in the communion of saints," comes therefore as a sort of climax in the Apostles' Creed. It emphasizes the present reality. In the exact sense of the Saviour's words we can say, our faith is "not of the dead, but of the living." We believe in, we know, the certainty of our possession in the blessed dead whom Christ will bring at his coming. All that he has revealed to us of life and immortality in our continuing earthly service, that and much more he is revealing to them in glory. It centers in the revelation of himself, the disclosing of his personal love, which fuses all into one in him. At the marriage supper of the Lamb not one of his children will be missing, and the cup of each shall be full. As Zwingli the Swiss reformer said in his dying confession, "Not one good man, one holy spirit, one faithful soul whom you will not there behold with God."

We have only to ask, then, How is this article of our faith to be kept prominent?

By cherishing the memorials of the dead. We

are a new country, and have few monuments. We are so busied with the passing cares of the life that now is, and the duty of providing for those about us, that we have little thought for the life beyond, and, except in the mourner's breast, scant place for the memory of those who have passed beyond. But let us not think of this other than as a loss. Saints' days are in our minds associated with a corrupt age that is well outgrown; but what the Church loses in failing to surround herself with the memorials of her noble dead, every traveler sees when he stands uncovered in what is to the nation that possesses it the most precious building in the world, Westminster Abbey.

From the day when the humble stone-cutters and wood-carvers and iron-workers of an obscure English parish joined to erect a church that should be in some degree a monument worthy of their faith, to this, when the greatest honor that England can pay any of her sons is a resting-place and a name within its walls, Westminster Abbey has spoken to the heart of the people. Many a weary spirit has found there new courage, as did the little bookseller's lad, a hundred years ago, who, turning in to rest with a heavy load of books, burst into involuntary tears at his bondage and hopelessness, and looking about him caught the spirit of the place, and said, "These men have fought bravely the battle of life, and won; and so

will I," and went out to become in time Joshua Marshman the colleague of Carey, the father-in-law of Havelock, the author of the Sanskrit Dictionary, the translator of Confucius, and one of the great pioneers of modern missions. Many a poet has sung, as one did the other day:—

. . "to royal Westminster
 Betimes I come, and gladly find
 Those stately churches towering there,
 Whose walls, that Milton saw, we see,
 Ah, were, I cried, like these my mind
 Great praise might be.
 Were strength like theirs that hold the night
 With solemn watch, though London sleep,
 To arm my soul with steadfast right,
 Then fear might end and hope be sure,
 Could I like them my vigil keep,
 Like them endure."

Ewald, the historian of Israel, says the times are full of promise when a nation is seen turning back, as the Hebrews did to Canaan, to the source from which it drew its life in its youth, to renew its strength by keeping alive its earliest inspirations. So the Church will always find nourishment for its faith, and quicken and sustain its hopes, in keeping before its eyes, in memorial days and enduring monument, the nature of the great truth that we are even now members of the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and are to have a home in the city of the Living God.

But still more important is it that we should practice fellowship with the living. Let us make more of the unity of believers, and less of our differences. The great problem of to-day is the reconstruction of human society on the basis of brotherhood. It is the final step in the mission of Jesus. Saved men are to organize in Jesus' name for the saving of the world. It can be done, not by the perfection of machinery, or the force of organization, however complete and comprehensive. The Church will fail utterly if it is turned aside to be the great social purveyor. Man's material wants are great and crying, heaven knows. But the Church will be shorn of its strength in fixing its attention upon the need of clubs and schools and baths and libraries and sanitation and model tenements. Its function is to open the springs of the soul, to save society by the strength of the inner life. He who raised up Christ from the dead will quicken the mortal members and change the exterior conditions of all life just so fast as hearts are opened to his incoming. When a social structure that is based on clashing interests gives place to one that rests on the sense of spiritual union begun now and to endure forever, the special and perplexing problems of civilization will quickly disappear. When we talk of the communion of saints, we are not dreaming dreams of a past that never will return, nor seeing visions of a

future too distant to concern us. We are interpreting the present as gathering into itself all that was good in the past, and containing all the possibilities of the future. We would fill our souls with great truths. We would open deep fountains of love and faith and hope, that death and time cannot affect. We dream dreams of glad reunions soon to come, and we see visions of the life that is waiting to be revealed. We keep alive the memory of the beloved dead, that in the sense of their presence we may, as our Lord did, receive strength for the sorrows and the cares of the life that we have still to accomplish.

If there is inspiration in bearing an honored name, or belonging to a great family, or continuing a history that has long been distinguished, what is to be said when the name is that of Christ, and the family is of the saints in heaven, and the history is of redemption?

I believe in the communion of saints, because I believe that the life we have received from the Lord Jesus Christ is the life that has come down through the men of the past who have lived for Christ, and shall pass on through unnumbered lives yet to be influenced by our example, blessed by our prayers, helped by our faithfulness, saved perhaps to God and heaven by our fidelity, as the Church, in the consciousness of its priceless possession, exalts its undy-

ing truth, fights persistently against the ever-present demand for dominion on the part of the material and the worldly that press upon us, tries to be true to its faith in the unseen and the eternal, and proves its right to a place in the love of God by the strength of the love of its members one for another.¹

¹ See Note 5.

XIV

THE AFFIRMATION OF PARDON

“The Forgiveness of Sins”

“ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.”

MATTHEW 9: 6.

CHAPTER XIV

THE AFFIRMATION OF PARDON

We should expect that so concise and so vital a confession as the Apostles' Creed would do something else than gather up odds and ends as it approaches its close. We look to see it come to a head, as an arrow.

A young theological student said to me, "The Apostles' Creed is not ethical." I replied, "I fear that you think so because you have not studied the Apostles' Creed." Christian faith always rests upon a foundation of practical life. Every affirmation of the Church's faith is the outcome of its experience, is the summarizing of the doctrine it has received as that doctrine has been put through the crucible of its daily life. The theses that Luther nailed on the church door in Wittenberg were not intended as abstract themes for dry theological discussion, or even as a bold attack upon the doctrine of indulgences. They were a summons to a view of life in its relations to God.

Whatever opinion men may have of the theological place of the testimony of the Christian consciousness,

no theological thinking will live that has not the whole man behind it; that is not the product of his heart no less than of his head.

Ritschl begins his great book on the History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation with the recognition of the fact that notwithstanding the existence of sin, the Church has freedom of religious intercourse with God, and at the same time, in the exercise of that freedom, orders its own life in conformity with God's expressed design. This implies a complete moral restoration of the whole man, and is the direct result of the historical revelation of God's purpose of grace in Jesus Christ. Nothing less than this, then, can be the contents of any confession that purports to give expression to the faith of the Church. Men are delivered from sin by Jesus Christ. From this all Christian doctrine starts, and to it as a constant ethical test must it all return.

The incident in our Lord's life that gave rise to the assertion of his power to forgive sins, occurred in the first year of his Galilæan ministry. The disciples had been called, and were settling to their task. Jesus had visited his home at Nazareth and made announcement of his mission to preach the gospel to the poor. He had drawn attention to himself by some notable miracles, like the healing of the nobleman's son and Peter's mother-in-law. As interest in him became

more intense he advanced to the healing of the leper, that the people might see that he was concerned with something more than the externals of life. Leprosy had always been the type of sin and guilt; his cure of it was to show that his mission was not simply to make men comfortable and prosperous. The time seemed to have come for the opening out of the thought of his heart. So we have the man sick of the palsy carried to the roof and let down through the tiling; and then the wonderful cure, with the preparatory statement, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Bodily healing that leaves the soul unreached and the life unchanged is nothing. His power is, before all, to forgive. The healing is only external witness to an internal cure which brings both access to God and a renewed life.

John the Baptist had preached a searching gospel of repentance, and men were widely troubled. It was clear enough that those who stole should steal no more, and that in the thing in which a man had broken the commandments he should repent. But John felt the need of something deeper and more thoroughgoing. We cannot conceive of the great prophet of the wilderness as being satisfied with men's amending their lives in externals, or being indifferent to the burden which the men whose hearts his words

had searched carried because of the things done in the past. The past has made the man, and no good resolutions can unmake him. We can catch something of the gladness, therefore, as well as the awe, with which John, when taught of God, saluted Jesus: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" It was that for which the world was waiting. He was only the herald. His baptism was of water. The coming One should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

We find Jesus at once assuming this function. Only life can create life. He must awaken in the hearts of men such expectation that they will begin to move toward him. When he says, "Follow me," they must leave their money-changing or their fishing-nets; or when he says, "Come unto me," there must be a growing conviction that if they should come, the weary would find rest and the burdened have their burden rolled away. Quickly he finds his opportunity with Nicodemus, and the woman at the well, and the chosen spirits that gather closest about him. He opens the mystery of the new birth and the water of life. He tells how the world through him is to be saved. Incidentally he shows his power over nature, as opportunity offers, that men may be expectant of something more, and when the multitude throngs about the helpless invalid with his four eager and

devoted friends, he looks around, and saying, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," adds, "Arise, and take up thy bed and go unto thy house." Men felt the charm of this new teacher. They knew their own unworthiness; they were awakened to the conviction of sin; the gracious message of his life opened the way for the manifestation of the power of God. They believed, and according to their faith it was done unto them.

Thus Jesus prepared the way for his Church to take up his work. In proportion as the Church lives out its doctrine, do men come to receive and believe its message. Carlyle's saying is true, "To teach religion, the first thing and the only thing is to find a man who has religion." The disciples took up the theme because they had the proof of its truth in their own hearts. The Holy Spirit witnessed with their spirits that they were sons of God. They were forgiven. They knew it. They had access to God and power to live new lives. So they preached Jesus the crucified Christ, and men were pricked in their hearts and repented; themselves in turn to take up the word, and repeat it to others. This became the form of the perfected message: "Repent . . . that your sins may be blotted out." From the beginning, those who proclaimed it believed that men may be safely led to

know their own guilt. There is no pardon and peace without it. The conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, is but another name for the process of conversion. From the days of John and of Jesus, the preaching that has brought salvation has created great searchings of heart, and has humbled men under a new knowledge that they are sinners.¹

Much modern teaching is just the opposite of this. Men are exhorted to love one another, to do kind acts, to grow in culture and the amenities of life, but in all to keep their thoughts turned away from themselves. There seems to be a new fear that we are too feeble to bear much self-knowledge. All other knowledge is good for us. We seek at least a taste of every science, and we drink more than a little of the dregs of the world's wickedness, to the end that we may know. But when it comes to ourselves and our own hearts, we are urged to think well of ourselves, and are carefully shielded against searching inquiry.

There is a wide-spread conviction that the Church itself is loth to hear much said about sin. Not only are the severities of the Gospel message toned down or put away, but the loss of the sense of sin as an ever-present and universal experience, bringing upon

¹ See Note 1.

the individual soul the burden of guilt and alienation from God, has affected the entire series of Christian doctrines, doing away with the necessity of an atoning sacrifice, reducing the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit to a beneficial influence, and making the final restitution of all men a necessity in the moral universe.

The Apostles' Creed has stood through the centuries a witness to the opposite truth. The Church has persistently affirmed its faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the renewing agency of the Holy Spirit, and the blessedness of the united life of the saints of God; and it has upheld deliverance from sin as the immediate consequence of this and the path by which restitution to God is accomplished. The revelation is given that men may have their eyes opened to see their helplessness and the shame of their departing from God, and like the prodigal in the far country, may arise and go to the Father. The concern is not with sin as a theological term, but with profligacy and greed and selfishness and dishonesty and impurity and worldliness and hatred and all uncharitableness and unbelief, and whatever separates the soul from God. To deliver us from sins such as these Christ has come and died. And because we believe in the efficacy of his work for us, we believe in the forgiveness of sins; of ours, therefore of every man's who

will avail himself of it. We do not fear to pray, "O God, show me myself!" because we at the same time pray, "O Lord, show me thyself." We believe the one prayer will not be answered without the answer to the other. We do not fear to know the exceeding sinfulness of our sin, because we believe that God knows it already, and, knowing, has, for Jesus' sake, forgiven it.

Therefore we believe in the forgiveness of sins, because we believe in the gospel of Christ, which is before all else a gospel to sinners; because so many sinners have been forgiven—the great multitude, from Paul, the chief of sinners, to the last penitent standing to confess the name of Jesus, all bearing testimony to what God has done for their souls; and because we have been forgiven ourselves—the blessed consciousness in the heart of every true believer that Jesus Christ has forgiven him. Because of these three great facts, we do not hesitate to affirm before any sinner that we believe there is forgiveness for him also if he will have it.

What should we have to preach without this assurance? The wife does not believe her husband is bad, or the mother her child, or the friend his friend. Indeed, we are continually humbled by the beautiful character and the tender kindness of those we love. But what shall we say when we are face to

face with a soul to whom God has spoken, and the question is not what you or I may think, or what the Church or the world may think, but what God thinks of him? Then the cry is, "Can there be pardon for such a sinner as I am?" "Is there possibility of a new life for one who has so long resisted God as I have done?" Where shall we find our answer? We must meet the question with a far surer affirmation than any based upon our own judgment of our friend's character. In that hour compliments are a mockery. Here is a soul into whom the light of eternity has shone. He is dealing with God. Away with your easy complacency. What our friend needs is to know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Tell him out of your own deepest convictions, that though his sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool. Then, and then only, do you bring him life and peace.¹

This, then, is the truth to which we ask testimony.

It is found first of all in the renewed life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Jesus presented the beauty of holiness in himself, and men said, "Never man so spake." His life, as no other's, confirmed his doctrine. Plato says, "Till the character is set in the direction of the ideal, a theory of the ideal is of no

¹ See Note 2.

value for the improvement of conduct." Christianity has upheld the loftiest ideal, because it could always appeal to the loftiest model. Its one rule has been, "Walk in the footsteps of Jesus," and its earliest apostles faced the world, saying, "Those things which ye have seen and heard in us, do." It is at once unchristian and immoral to adopt any other method. The injunction "Do as I say, not as I do," has no warrant in the gospel of Christ. Until the Christian shows the proof of his doctrine in his life, he carries no healing to others. It was said in the wars between the Moors and the Spaniards that a perfect character would be a man who had the virtues of the Mussulman and the creed of the Christian. But this is reversing our Lord's doctrine. Dean Stanley, commenting on it, indignantly said, "If the virtues of the Arabs were juster than the virtues of the Spaniards, then, whether they accepted Christ or not, it was they who were the true believers, and it was the Christians who were the infidels." We may not go so far as that, for we have not the knowledge to compare man with man, or to judge righteous judgment. But this is sure, that immorality cannot hide successfully behind orthodoxy, and that the first evidence of faith is to be sought in the renewed life.

Notwithstanding its sins and its failures, the mistakes and the imperfection of its grasp upon the truth,

the Church has yet been enabled to work out something of Christ, revealing to the world what is the beauty of holiness, what is the power of the forgiven heart in its mastery over itself, what is that perpetual love which seeks not its own, and which is growing little by little into the likeness of Him who wrought

“With human hands the creed of creeds,
In loveliness of perfect deeds.”

Never boasting of ourselves, but ever of the peace of God, we can rejoice that he does give something of victory over our own hearts, that we have something we can offer to the world as ours; that the Church of Jesus Christ is proving the reality of its ideal by something of improvement in its conduct.

Some years ago a distinguished layman, then my neighbor, a member of another communion that does not hold the divinity of Christ, one day stopped me on the street and said, “I have long wanted to say something to you. I have been watching the work of your church for some time. We used to say in New England that you orthodox people have the theory, but we have the practice. I now want to say that I think you have both the theory and the practice.” I thanked him, and as I walked away said to myself, “Has there ever been any other standard and teaching than that for the Church of Jesus Christ?

Has there ever been a group of men and women bearing the name of Jesus Christ who could for one moment justify themselves before men—not to say before God—as having the faith of Jesus, if they did not live the life of Jesus?" They may have misinterpreted the pattern, they have often perverted the teaching, but they have never repudiated the standard as the mark and test of their high calling. Therefore it is our duty—to state the truth of Jesus? Yes—but to state still more strongly the necessary application of that truth—*i.e.*, to live pure and honest and true lives.

The second testimony to the forgiveness of sins is the power to live near to God, the sense of a constant, divine companionship which the Saviour promised to those who love him, and which seals the believer's acceptance.

Many have read the story of Brother Lawrence, the great, awkward footman, who was converted in such a way that he was led to believe that, as God renews the life of a tree in the spring, so He could make even the dry tree of his unprofitable life bloom and blossom to Himself in daily fruitage. He offered himself as a lay brother to the Carmelite friars, and, in the most menial tasks, for more than sixty years, lived in constant sense of the presence of God. His only explanation of the singular strength and beauty of his

life was that God was with him from the beginning. No one had taught him this. God had spoken to him, and dwelt in him. Of whatever he had to do he said, "Lord, this is thy work. Thou must see that it is well done." And the help was invariably given, until his life attracted the attention of others, and has survived as a blessed influence upon many for upwards of two hundred years. With no peculiar instruction, with no exceptional opportunities, this man was enabled to enter into the precious secret that to the man who has learned to "practice the presence of God" there is given not only power to do the work of God, but uninterrupted communion with God, as to a child whose father's arms are always about him, and his father's love filling his heart.

When we say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," and seek to apply that assurance to our own hearts, or turn to our friends, striving to bring them to the same blessed condition, we need to know that we have in ourselves these two irrefutable confirmations of our testimony: we are living a new and Christian life; and we are practising the presence of God.

Can there be any doubt that the Christian who so lives, or the Church which so witnesses, will not fail in its testimony? Can there be any question of the truth of the affirmation of the Creed now before us, when God's Spirit so works in the hearts of sinful men that

blind eyes are opened to see the glories of God, and dull hearts are quickened to the truth of the divine indwelling, and humble, common lives are so irradiated with the beauty of Jesus Christ? Can there be doubt that when any man looks into his own heart, and probing it to the bottom asks himself what kind of a life he is living, and what is his greatest need before a holy God, and feels himself a guilty soul in the presence of his Judge, and cries to the rocks and hills to cover him from the divine Presence; can there be any doubt that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive his sins, and that He will do it, and will lift up and renew his life, and bring into his heart the presence of God, filling his soul with joy and peace? One has but to try it, to know.

XV

THE AFFIRMATION OF A BODILY
RESURRECTION

“The Resurrection of the Body”

“And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 THESS. 5 : 23.

CHAPTER XV

THE AFFIRMATION OF A BODILY RESURRECTION

We are not now concerned with any question as to the condition of the soul immediately after death, or as to the state of the dead prior to the coming of our Lord in the resurrection, or as to the final condition of the wicked. The affirmation of the Church is as to the resurrection of believers; and it asserts that that is a bodily one. The question before us then is as to the truth of the affirmation, and as to its meaning.

This clause of the Apostles' Creed has been in the Creed from the beginning, and is repeated in innumerable churches every Sunday, but if you ask the next Christian you meet if he believes it, he will answer No, or hold you for a long explanation. Yet in the extremest form, *carnis resurrectionem*, the resurrection of the flesh, has been the unchanging phrase from the Creed of Aquileia in 390 A.D. onward. Its exact equivalent appears in the earliest Greek Confession, that of Marcellus, in 341 A.D. A century earlier the Creed of Tertullian uses the same words. Our English translation has read, since the time of Henry

VIII, 1543 A. D., "body," as a truer equivalent than "flesh."

The original utterance was the Church's prompt and emphatic reply to the spiritualistic vagaries of the Gnostic heretics. The heathen world had always believed in the importance of the body to the well-being of the soul after death. The pyramids of Egypt and the costly tombs of Thebes were simply an effort to provide such permanent and indestructible abode for the body that the soul might be assured of constant access to it.

The Greeks thought of their dead as shadowy spirits, haunting the nearer shore of Acheron until proper burial of the body ensured their ferrying over to some sort of corporeal life in the fields of Elysium. Even Plato, while he ridiculed excessive concern for the body after death, held that the soul must needs return to it, perhaps after four hundred years.

Inevitably the question of the state of the dead came up in the early Church almost at once. It was not a dry speculation, any more than it is to-day. It was the passionate cry of bleeding hearts, asking after husband, or wife, or child, with an urgency not to be put off with vague generalities or any mere importations from heathenism. The wail

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!"

goes back to Eve and Abel. Indeed, it was the occasion for the earliest of the New Testament writings. The converts at Thessalonica had barely settled into the joy of the new life before their peace was broken up and their faith all but destroyed by the death of some of their number. In the faith of Jesus' victory over death they had been baptized. They had learned to believe with the apostles in his coming again quickly. They were expectant of the new heaven and the new earth. The reality of the new life they had abundantly proved. Yet while they were in the first flush of their new joy, honored and beloved members of the Church were smitten with disease; and with intolerable distress they saw them go down into the grave. Was their faith, then, vain? Was sin again to reign in them? They sent hurriedly to the apostle Paul, who had taught them the new gospel, and he as promptly replied: "Do not be concerned, beloved. Your dead have suffered no loss; the Lord has taken them to bring them again at his coming; you who are alive and remain will have no advantage over them through your then being in the flesh. Indeed, they will welcome you into the perfected life. We will pray that your body and soul and spirit may be preserved entire, without blame, with them, at the coming of the Lord Jesus."

Soon after, the same question seems to have arisen

in Corinth, and in his first letter to that church, Paul goes into it with still fuller detail. He reviews the evidence of Jesus' resurrection, first as given to the disciples, then to the five hundred, last of all to himself; abundant, cumulative evidence of the indisputable fact that Jesus had died, his body been laid in the tomb, and then that on the third day he rose from the dead. The grave was empty. Jesus himself stood before them saying, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." And he showed them his hands and his feet, bearing the wound-marks they knew so well; and he ate with them, and vanished.

The details of the change Paul did not enter into, but he staked everything upon the fact. The life that Jesus brought into the world is an abundant life. Nothing will be found wanting when the work is finished. Death must come, but it is only a transition. Every possibility of existence which God implanted in the soul made in his image, shall eventually be realized. We shall see him as he is, and be like him in that large sense in which God shall see his completed work in his ransomed children. Because he lives, and as he lives, we shall live also.

But some man says, "How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" We see the

body gradually fail, until it ceases to be the obedient instrument of the soul. Then it dies, and is laid away in the grave, what is of the earth returning to earth. Is it to be revived and renewed? "How foolish you are," says the apostle. "You have but to open your eyes to find your answer in the natural world. The seed you sow grows again, but not the identical, naked seed you planted. That perished; but in its perishing, the life hidden in it revealed the mysterious faculty of reincorporating itself. It seized upon the dead earth about it, and speedily shaped for itself a habitation, to each seed its own body. Look further; a similar law maintains everywhere in nature. Birds, beasts, fishes, all have their individuality of bodily life. Even the stars, those "patines of bright gold," which

"Thick inlay the floor of heaven,"

are not lost in a world of indiscriminate existence, for "one star differeth from another star in glory." There are bodies terrestrial, and there are what corresponds to this, bodies celestial.¹

"How little you understand it! Here the body is mortal, corruptible, carnal; there it is immortal, incorruptible, spiritual. Here death reigns in all; but death itself, the last enemy, is for us vanquished. The

¹ See Note 1.

first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam is not merely a human soul, he is a life-giving spirit, having power to renew and preserve our entire being. In his coming and triumph we shall see the finished work. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. I show you a mystery. The forms in which you know the material of the body are transient. They will be changed. But we shall be ourselves, glorified, entire. Death has lost its sting. The victory shall be Christ's, and shall be complete. Therefore be at peace."¹

Paul amplifies this in many another utterance in later epistles. The emancipation Jesus had wrought begins in the new spiritual life Christians already know. This carries in itself the warrant of eternal existence. As we are redeemed by Jesus' death, we are to be saved in his life. At his coming, Christ is to change, not "our vile body" (for the apostle never vilifies the body), but "the body of our humiliation," *i.e.*, the body pertaining to the life of humiliation into which our Lord himself entered when he was made in the likeness of men, into "the body of his glory," *i.e.* into a body like his own as it is in the perfected life of his post-resurrection kingdom. This new body, old yet new, made of heavenly substance, is the "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal,

¹ See Notes 2, 3 and 4.

in the heavens," for which the apostle longed, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with the final house which is from heaven—a consummation to be attained when the Lord shall come.¹

Everywhere the New Testament represents the life in Christ as both abundant and progressive. Salvation is already begun in all who receive Christ. And while it is the Lord's will that for a time they shall continue upon earth and under the law of physical death, the fashion of this world is passing rapidly away, and they who are not of this world already have in them the promise and the potency of a post-mortem existence, in which, with undiminished faculties, they shall advance to a final completion in a post-resurrection life, of which perfected corporeity in some form is an essential condition. "He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8: 11), is the specific promise, and in the light of other Scripture is not to be restricted to the immediate influence of the Christian spirit on the Christian's personal appearance. It points to a change in the whole man, of which heaven is to be the realization. Our Lord's farewell words as to the "mansions" he is preparing, gain significance in this connection. He will finish the work that was given him to do only

¹ See Note 5.

when the redemption he made possible by his sacrificial death shall be accomplished in the renewal of every man who is given to him, in his entire body.

In spite of Paul's warning about "flesh and blood," we are continually stumbling over the difficulties inherent in the material body. But how little we know about matter! We think of it as the antithesis of life. We are accustomed to attribute to it qualities determined by this antithesis. It is inert, ponderable, impenetrable, infinitely divisible, and so on. But to-day the physicists announce all matter as in motion, and the philosophers go so far as to say that matter and energy may prove to be synonymous terms. This is enough to make us distrust the seriousness of the difficulty which our conception of the body imposes upon the teaching of the Scripture. When we observe matter as we know it, we see it gathering about an invisible form, or conception, to make the crystal, as of quartz or salt, always the same; and in higher degree the living cell, also, always itself and identical, which in turn falls into place in the living body, likewise after its kind—preparing in its most developed form the habitat of the soul, each also itself and original, which seems to mark the ultimate purpose of the entire process. We remember Spenser's lines in the "Faerie Queene":

"For of the soul the body form doth take,
The Soul is Form, and doth the Body make."

Some mysterious force has dominion over what we know as crude matter. It carries it forwards and upwards in ever new combinations, with many an inexplicable leap, over seemingly impassable gulfs where life appears, or sensation, or thought, until it reaches a seeming finality in man. Then we suddenly discover that this controlling force, this living power, is not simply in a man, it is the man himself. Whatever may be true outside him or below him, he is the center of his own being, he thinks, feels, wills; and as for his body when he leaves it, it is no longer what it was, a part of himself, but simply inanimate clay—a lump like any other clod.¹

Matter, then, is not complete until we find it in the living man. What possibilities it has beyond, we do not know. What it has in man we should have as little known had we not had experience of it. In any case nature has already widened out to embrace what once was held the supernatural, for nature now embraces man, and man is spirit, and spirit reaches up to the Being of God. We do not know the soul apart from its life in the body. The term disembodied spirit suggests something essentially unreal and vague. Even Dante's imagination lost such spirits in the "viewless wind." There appears ground for the conception, not that the soul is material, or the prod-

¹ See Notes 6 and 7.

uct of what is known as matter, but that matter in some exalted form stands in vital relation to spirit. Immortality by no means rests on the present physical basis of life, but it is something other than perpetual transference to new conditions and embodiments, spiritual or otherwise. We are every one of us experiencing, so far as we know, primary and enduring conditions of the spirit's life in what presents itself to us as corporeity. In our entirety of body and soul we are ourself. Creation does not lie outside us. The body is more and other than flesh as we know it. The philosopher and the poet apprehend something of the great underlying truth. Lotze defines the body as a "ripple around a submerged stone;" the atoms change in the ceaseless flow, the ripple remains. And Wordsworth in his sonnet on the river Duddon, mourning the friends of long ago, sings:

"Still glides the stream, and shall forever glide,
The Form remains, the Function never dies."

So nature suggests the riddle which revelation solves. Life as we know it, individual and corporeal, is attacked at its center by sin and death. The dissolution of soul and body is no less a dissolution than is the decomposition of a seed, or the breaking up of a chemical compound. Not that the dissolutions are identical, but they are both more than a mechanical

separation, they are a veritable dissolution of elements having permanent relations, and only in their union finding the real possibilities of their nature. In the reunion of those several elements we seek the fulness of renewed existence. The death that sin introduces will be undone in the resurrection life which Jesus brings. Body, soul and spirit will be rescued from dissolution, and immortality will be no abstract ideal, but the rich fulness of a life in which all history and all nature find their place, a life for which we are preparing the materials day by day. This earthly life is in the truest sense not a preparation for, but a part of, the eternal life. It is in this sense not a probation, but a participation. We have the answer to Browning's broken-hearted prayer at La Saisiaz:

"Grant me once again assurance we shall meet each some day,
Walk, but with how bold a footstep! on a way, but what a
way!
Worse were best, defeat were triumph, utter loss were utmost
gain."

Here, then, is proof of the divine economy, and that becomes proof of the doctrine. Is there anywhere in nature such a woful waste as would appear if our bodies, after all the labor spent upon them, should go into irretrievable decay? The last word of science is of the correlation and preservation of everything; and shall the body, our great possession, with

the care of which and the adapting of which to our own purposes life has unfolded, is this to perish utterly? It has played large part in fashioning my intellect and my character, it is true, and they abide; but can it be that after standing to me in a relation more constant and subtle in its intimacy than that of any friend, it is to be worn out and cast away as a mere garment? Nothing is further from the truth. The Christian turns to the promise of his Lord and says, "Ah! the dear form that I loved, the lips that I kissed, the eye that answered to my eye, the touch that thrilled my very soul, the blessed personal companionship which was open to no other, the fingers that gained their skill, beautiful, delicate, divine; the voice that sang for others and thrilled for me, the very smile—the first smile on the face of my child, the last loving look of the young son that I laid away, all these are mine!" They are to come back in the resurrection. They are kept, as the treasure laid up in heaven. They are the blessed dead in Christ, who are to come with him in his triumph. They are to be the witness in their person of his finished work. They are to prove the change of this body of humiliation into the body of his glory. Nothing has been wasted. No least particle of personality has been lost. The mother will embrace her child, her very own; and the child will look and breathe and live in the smile on the

face of the mother. Surely the eye, the ear, the taste, the voice, the hand, no less than the brain and the heart, are to find place for their perfected powers in the occupations of that other life where God's servants do serve him.¹

See what a revolution this also involves in our relations to God and God's universe. Here "this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly shut us in;" consequently our eyes are dim to the vision of God, and our interpretations of him and of his ways are lame and inconsequential. But when in the full possession of senses which are our very self, but are no longer dulled with the sad entail of evil, or beclouded and enfeebled from the contact of fleshly lusts and passions, we shall see God as he is and be like him, then we shall know as we are known, and all the sweep of the divine thought and the significance of the divine guidance will be clear.²

The same applies to our relations to one another. How much we suffer from half understandings and misunderstandings! Even the closest friends get a new knowledge of each other in the new sorrow; as we are distressed by the revelation of unlooked-for evil in the day of betrayal. What father really knows his son? At best we grope in the dark in our relations with one another; not only on the side of

¹ See Notes 8 and 9.

² Note 10.

disappointment, but on the side of love and tenderness and sympathy and all the wealth of unrevealed affection. Think of the meaning of the day when we shall look through the eye to the heart, when we shall feel the very soul in the grasp of the hand, and this body of humiliation shall have become the perfected instrument for the expression of hearts that are absolutely one!

Here, then, is the blessed assurance of restoration to the very loved ones that are ours. Often in weariness and pain, always under the shadow of impending sickness and death, and surrounded with those who wear the garments of mourning, you and I and all of us believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are doing our work, traveling our pilgrimage, bearing our testimony; and with how many vacant seats in our homes, how much of loneliness in our hearts, if not to-day, surely to-morrow. The day is coming when not only shall the anxiety over those we love vanish, but those who have been smitten by the arrow of death shall come back unwounded, to change no more. The life beyond is to be no series of strange vicissitudes and incomprehensible changes. It is to be the prolongation of the very life that now is. As we have received that life, with love and forgiveness and trust in God and joy in the Holy Ghost and divine fellowship one with another, we have passed from death into life.

The full reality is yet to be made manifest. Not to us only, but, as Paul says, "also to all them that have loved his appearing." It is to be the great day of the harvest home, the day of Christ's final triumph. Therefore the Church in this closing testimony of the Creed, closely connected, as you will now recognize, with the previous affirmation, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," by which the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ has come into my sin-sick, smitten soul,—says also, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," in which the final and perfect work of forgiveness is realized.¹

"Not changed, but glorified! Oh, beauteous language
 For those who weep,
 Mourning the loss of some dear face departed,
 Fallen asleep;
 Hushed into silence, never more to comfort
 The hearts of men;
 Gone, like the sunshine of another country,
 Beyond our ken!

"Oh, dearest dead, we saw thy white soul shining
 Behind the face,
 Bright with the beauty and celestial glory
 Of an immortal grace!
 What wonder that we stumble, faint and weeping,
 And sick with fears,
 Since thou hast left us—all alone with sorrow,
 And blind with tears!

"Can it be possible no words shall welcome
 Our coming feet?
 How will it look, that face that we have cherished,
 When next we meet?

¹ See Notes 11 and 12.

Will it be changed, so glorified and saintly,
 That we shall know it not?
 Will there be nothing that will say, 'I love thee,
 And I have not forgot?'

"Oh, faithless heart, the same loved face, transfigured,
 Shall meet thee there,
 Less sad, less wistful, in immortal beauty
 Divinely fair!
 The mortal veil, washed pure with many weepings,
 Is rent away,
 And the great soul that sat within its prison
 Hath found the day.

"In the clear morning of that other country,
 In Paradise,
 With the same face that we have loved and cherished
 She shall arise!
 Let us be patient, we who mourn, with weeping,
 Some vanished face,
 The Lord has taken but to add more beauty
 And a diviner grace.

"And we shall find once more, beyond earth's sorrows,
 Beyond these skies,
 In the fair city of the "sure foundations,"
 Those heavenly eyes,
 With the same welcome shining through their sweetness
 That met us here—
 Eyes, from whose beauty God has banished weeping
 And wiped away the tear."

XVI

THE AFFIRMATION OF ETERNAL LIFE

“And the Life Everlasting”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 PETER 1: 3-5.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AFFIRMATION OF ETERNAL LIFE

The Creed begins with the affirmation of faith in God from whom we come ; it closes with the affirmation of faith in the everlasting life to which we hope to go. It presents that life as established in God, and as the final result to which the whole redemptive work of God is directed. There is that in our hearts which declares that anything short of this would be failure. We come from God, and we are made to go to him again.

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life’s star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
From God, who is our home.”

We readily believe, with Wordsworth, as he gazed at the little girl with her ignorance of the meaning of death, that

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy ;”

but with our advancing manhood we want something firmer than the Intimations of Immortality in the

Recollections of Early Childhood, as the foundation of our faith in everlasting life. The Church has had a clearer vision than this. Her faith in immortality is no vague fancy,

. . . "reaching to some great world
In ungauged darkness hid."

She has sung through the centuries her noble hymns of the resurrection life, and has held fast her confession through every form of sorrow and trial, because she has known the connection between the triumphant Christ and "the land that is fairer than day," and has been sure of the home that awaits the believer with his Lord.

The world has always been hungry for proof of immortality, and there is no end of books to supply it. Their number and the variety of their argument would seem to show that the difficulty of proof is proportioned to the greatness of the desire. Science pauses before the fateful door, and philosophy gives us only more or less acute speculation as to what may lie beyond the gates of death. Dr. Newman Smyth has just now attempted to establish proof of immortality on the basis of the doctrine of evolution, as Dr. George A. Gordon has done, upon consideration of the character of God; and Prof. John Fiske, upon the worth and dignity of man. Their arguments are interesting and suggestive, but do not satisfy. The

moral worth of man is a most uncertain quantity. God, however adorable his character, as a matter of fact tolerates sin and death in this world ; so far as philosophy can show, he may therefore endure them in another world ; and as for evolution, waiving all question of its being at best but a working hypothesis, and, its friends being witness, still in the realm of undemonstrated dogma, it can point but to a probable survival of the race, not of the individual ; and what concerns us is not the final destiny of humanity, but our individual fate. The life everlasting which now occupies us and to which the Church bears witness, is that which the apostle saw before him when he wrote the confident utterance of the opening words of his epistle to the scattered and persecuted Christians of the Dispersion, the living hope of an inheritance our very own, "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," the completion and the crown of the salvation which our Lord has wrought for us (1 Peter 1 : 3-5).

Therefore we turn from speculation to revelation. We gladly recognize the preparatory service the philosophers have rendered us. Kant, for example, laid solid foundations in his "We ought, therefore we can, therefore we are free;" and Hegel when he added, "because of God," established Kant's postulates of God and immortality, upon grounds which, if

not adequately and completely Christian, have proved to many troubled souls enlightening and preparatory to faith. Bishop Butler's great argument still stands to show the probability both of the future life and of revelation; while Coleridge and Emerson and Carlyle have done much to prepare the minds of men for the conviction that God is self-revealing, and that nothing is more reasonable than the faith of the Christian when he turns to hear what the Lord his God will say. But our confidence is in the revelation, not in the philosophy. We believe that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and we believe that we have eternal life in him. Therefore we turn to his words to know what that life is.

The New Testament is full of the subject; but let us take our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, when in his ministry he opened up the question in its deepest relations. To sweep away Nicodemus' confession that he was "a teacher come from God," Jesus announces the doctrine of the new birth. "Except a man be born anew," or "from above," "he cannot see the kingdom of God." Not simply to give knowledge of the new birth, and to awaken in sinful men a sense of the need of it, but to bring the life which would produce it, was Jesus' mission. He revealed that life in himself; he bore testimony to a unique personal experience; and in the strength of that, he summoned

Nicodemus to believe that the life from God might be imparted to him also. The ultimate purpose of his coming he declared when he said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:16, 17).

Here, then, is the definition of eternal life, and the method by which it is to be attained. It is identical with the new nature given in the birth from above by the Holy Ghost. It comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a present possession, to be known in its fulness hereafter. Upon the fact of its present reality, Jesus dwelt often and fully. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

The great hindrance to faith in eternal life as a present reality, then as now, was the universal presence of sin and misery. It is the problem of the Book of Job. The Old Testament saints had not the clear vision of the future which would enable them rightly to interpret the conditions of the present life.

The Jews of Jesus' time had attained to a clearer prospect of the life to come, but, through their legal conception of the relation of man to God, this life was to them merely an occasion for performing religious tasks of righteousness and self-denial, in exchange for which they would obtain future reward. Jesus taught that this life, with all its trouble, is full of manifestations of God's grace and of experiences that are a foretaste of heavenly joy, and a fitting preparation for it. Even death, the great enemy, does not interfere to prove more than an incident in the believer's progress. On the way to the grave of Lazarus, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).¹

Beyond the grave Jesus presents a future state of bliss as the goal to which he is leading his followers. His parting promise is, "I go to prepare a place for you." The goal is to be attained at the close of the earthly service with its mingled experiences of joy and sorrow, of orphanage and comfort, of answered prayer, and of the world's hostility, of the burdens of which his farewell address is full. But the future is none the less sure and triumphant. "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (16: 33). Jesus was to rise from

¹ See Note 1.

the dead and come again, because of the life of God in him. So the believer is to find eternal life, because in him also is the life of God through Jesus Christ his Lord. The resurrection is not the condition, but the result, of eternal life. That life begins in the new birth of the penitent soul turning to Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation. It is confirmed in the Christian experience, as the true believer finds that, for him, the old has passed away and all things have become new. The resurrection then becomes the introduction to the final and triumphant stage of the life that is hid with Christ in God. It is like the entrance of the bride to her new home; it is the fruition to which the plighted troth and the days of preparation have in due time led.¹

The characteristics of that life are not left in uncertainty. It begins in its completeness with the second coming of our Lord. The life centers in him; the resurrection is his triumph; he will bring his saints with him, and life in its fulness will be realized by them in perfect fellowship with him. Love alone makes true life for us now. Where love is dead, or the loved one is gone, little remains. I stood not long since by the side of a friend in the bedchamber that had been his wife's. Her garments still hung in the half-opened closets, her toilet articles were still upon the dressing-

¹ See Notes 2, 3 and 4.

table. The beautiful apartment remained just as it had been prepared for her occupancy; and she was dead. My friend has wealth, a great business, the splendid residence, youth; but he could not be comforted. His life had centered in that single, satisfying companionship. With it he was content; without it he cared for nothing. It is a picture, imperfect but instructive, of the life beyond and its satisfying promise. All things are yours, for ye are Christ's. The life everlasting will be attained when the resurrection day gives back to us our loved ones, and the Lord in whom they and we have found our life.

"Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." It is connected with the final judgment. For that all shall appear; believers to receive the blessed assurance that they indeed have continued unto the end. Theirs is to be the reward of those who have overcome. They have known that He who redeemed them from sin will keep them unto the end. Now they have final assurance that they are saved by his life.

What life will be for the unbeliever, and who will remain unbelievers, or how many, we do not know. The revelation of the life everlasting is for the believer. The bare terms in which those who are described as "lost" are spoken of, suggest that perhaps

they may be found; those who are to be "judged." may yet escape condemnation; those who are "in danger of eternal fire," may possibly be delivered. But again they may not; and the emphasis is certainly against it. Their condition is described in words of gravest import; their peril is as serious as language can depict; the warnings and the imagery of the Scriptures give ground for a hope, which even the most eager interpreters find only despairing, for any space for repentance in the other world; and in any case the day of judgment fixes a point at which decisions become final. The revelation of eternal life is a summons to every man to repent, in Browning's phrase, "the day before his death," that is, to-day.

As to the occupations of heaven, Principal Fairbairn gives us a striking illustration. He says, "Imagine immortality realized under the conditions of time, a man as old as the race, yet retaining, as immortals must, unexhausted and exuberant, the energies and hopes of youth. He had met the fallen pair as

"They hand in hand, with wandering step and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way;"

had looked with Noah from the ark; had talked with Abraham after God had met him; had seen Moses as he came down from the mount, and rejoiced with the multitude that accompanied David when he entered

Jerusalem; he had visited the empires of Egypt and Assyria, and watched the meeting of their mighty hosts; had listened to the discourses of Plato, and followed the conquests of Alexander; had beheld the rise of Rome, and had been in Judæa when the Christ was crucified; and had, step by step, alongside the march of events between then and now, walked as counselor and companion with the great men and thinkers of the Christian centuries. Now would not this man—an eager spirit all the time, open-eyed, hungry for knowledge, communicative, acquisitive, ever learning by experience how better to learn, to teach, to live—be a mightier contribution to the knowledge of the world, a louder call to its wonder, than the greatest library it can boast? And in the city of God are there not innumerable spirits of even immenser experience, riper wisdom, more varied capabilities of knowledge? And why do these live except to communicate, to teach, to help to lift the ideal and achievements of the city, to raise its standard of beatitude and obedience? Immortality is not idleness; it must know progressive obedience to be happy, increasing activity that it may have growing beatitude.”¹

The supreme test that we apply to our occupations and aims here is their relation to human life. Do

¹ The City of God, p. 368.

they preserve and promote it? Scientifically, no less than morally, that is, from the standpoint of the political economist no less than from that of the preacher, we find justification for the artist and the musician, the doctor and the teacher, as well as for the carpenter and the baker, in that they contribute to the fulness and joy of living. Whatever does this, has a right to be; whatever does not, is politically and morally wrong. See what a place this gives in the life of heaven for the employment of every faculty, and for the delight of souls who see that every exercise of mind or heart is a contribution to the larger life of those we love, and a helpful participation in the unfolding of the plans of God. In the New Jerusalem the tree of life bears "twelve manner of fruits," and the leaves of the tree are "for the healing of the nations." There is perfect supply for every need, and no productive effort is without boundless result.¹

The life everlasting is unfolding now under varied and complicated conditions. The parables of the kingdom represent it. It is the seed falling, some in the trodden path, where the soil is thin, some among the choking thorns, and some in good ground. It is the wheat growing with the tares. It is the dragnet gathering of every kind; the great supper with its rejected invitations and the hardly-compelled partic-

¹ See Notes 5 and 6.

ipants; the wedding feast with the unworthy guest; the wicked husbandmen refusing the tribute of the harvest; the barren fig tree; the pearl of great price which to-day so many decline to buy; and the ten virgins of whom five were foolish. But for all the various conditions and the hidden and devious progress, it is surely advancing, and so far as we are concerned the end is near. Many shall come from the east and from the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom, and the children of the kingdom, many at least who had opportunity and privilege which they despised, shall be cast out.¹

A sweet spirit, and a great scholar, the late Professor Edwin Hatch, of Oxford, closes his Hibbert Lectures with this sentence: "Though you may believe that I am but a dreamer of dreams, I seem to see, though it be on the far horizon—the horizon beyond the fields which either we or our children will tread—a Christianity which is not new, but old, which is not old, but new, a Christianity in which the moral and spiritual elements will again hold their place, in which men will be bound together by the bond of mutual service, which is the bond of the sons of God, a Christianity which will actually realize the brotherhood of men, the ideal of the first communities."

That dream is to be realized only through the power

¹ See Note 7.

of a brighter though more distant vision, that of the resurrection life and the city come down from God out of heaven. As the Church comes to feel the actual presence of the living Christ leading his followers on, notwithstanding the pains and resistances of the present world, to the day, ever drawing nearer and becoming more real, when he shall come again to finish his work in bringing back from the dead the ten thousand of his saints clothed in the resurrection body, henceforth to know as they are known, the true adoption of the sons of God and the true brotherhood of men will be realized, and men will be eager to live it so far as they can in the life that now is. In short, a firm and illumined grasp upon the doctrine of the other life and the inheritance waiting to be revealed is the essential condition of the right understanding of this life and getting the best out of it.

The testimony of the lay brother of the Carmelite friars, Brother Lawrence, ought to be the glad confession of every life: "I must in a little time go to God. What comforts me in this life is that I may see him by faith; and I see him in such manner as might make me say sometimes, I believe no more, but I see."¹

¹ See Notes 8 and 9.

XVII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ANCIENT
FAITH AS A WHOLE

“Amen”

“Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.”

JUDE 3.

CHAPTER XVII

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ANCIENT FAITH AS A WHOLE

We have not completed our task until we deal with the question of the Creed as a whole. The individual affirmations may be true and important, and yet the question remain unanswered why there should be a creed. Is not the Bible enough? Do not formal confessions interfere with liberty of conscience and that free intellectual life which is so essential to the best religious growth? Do they not engender hypocrisy, intolerance and bigotry? Do they not provoke divisions and perpetuate strife?

The answer is suggested in the exhortation of Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, when writing to the "Beloved" he exhorts them to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." It has the ring of a battle cry. It stirs the blood. It is not a call to military service, the pomp of arms, and feats of heroic daring, but to that far more difficult courage which is required when the issues are moral and spiritual rather than physical. It is hard to contend earnestly for the faith when the

times are loose; when much that men have held is in flux; when a positive faith is considered ignorance and bigotry; when to be "liberal" is the current euphemism for being without convictions, and spiritual enthusiasm is regarded as jejune. It requires a high order of courage to "hold the pattern of sound words," when the heart is oppressed, as Paul's so continually was, with "strife . . . divisions, heresies," and a man's foes are those of his own household.

Writing, as some think, quite at the close of the apostolic period, Jude has this stirring exhortation for the Church. He says not a word of persecution. Already the Church has given proof of her readiness to walk in the steps of the crucified Christ, and the summons to martyrdom has been joyfully met. Jude is concerned wholly with perils from within. He would have believers remember the warnings of the apostles concerning those who in the last time would make separations; he would have them keep themselves in the love of God, and save those "who are in doubt." Therefore in connection with the most beautiful doxology in the New Testament, "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all

time, and now, and for evermore. Amen;" we find him exhorting them in the words we have quoted.

There is then "the faith," *i.e.* a definite body of truth, constituting the apostolic message. When Jesus was on the earth, he was himself the truth, and faith was apprehending him. The term is used in the gospels to describe the act of the believer. He has faith, and according to his faith it is done unto him. But in the Book of the Acts and in the Epistles, faith takes on an additional significance. It comes to be used of the substance of the Christian doctrine, as when it was said of Paul, he "now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc," and "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." This meaning of the term gains definiteness as the years go by, and the word remains permanently intelligible in both senses. It describes the internal act or state of the believer; it defines equally the contents and sum of the message which he has first received and now offers to others.

This, Jude says, was "once for all" delivered to the saints. Here again he uses a New Testament term which has a definite significance. "As it is appointed unto men once to die . . . so Christ also, having been once offered . . . shall appear." It indicates an act not necessarily transpiring in a moment, but when it did transpire, however long it took, complete. Our Lord's offering of himself was a continuous and pro-

longed act, but, when completed in his sacrificial death, it was forever done. So the truth which he had brought from God he had gradually declared. He could say at last, "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them." These words the apostles received and communicated to others as they were taught of the Spirit. When they were so delivered, they came to be the body of doctrine of the Church, the faith to the elucidation of which the Church ever gives her strength, but which in its substance is once for all complete.

Furthermore, the truth is "delivered." It is not the outcome of human speculation or experience. Paul distinctly repudiates the thought that it had come to him with any less authority than directly from the hand of God. It is therefore for the Church authoritative. When we know what the teaching of the Scripture really is, as interpreted in the light of our present intelligence, we have reached what for the Christian has always been the end of controversy.

This body of truth constitutes a definite trust. It has been delivered "to the saints." Every believer is so far a witness and an ambassador. He has not simply a book in his hand, but a living faith in the essential truth contained in the book, taken up, proved and illustrated in his heart and life. Each Christian is, in one sense, a new Bible, as the truth of the Bible gains

something of new meaning and power through his renewed soul. Therefore we are all debtors to the world. This message from God gradually delivered unto the fathers in the prophets "by divers portions and in divers manners," which was taken up by Jesus and constituted the gospel of salvation for the lost world, is the faith in which by the grace of God we live and move and have our being as Christians, and in trust with which we are sent into the world to make disciples of all nations. It certainly is something worth contending for, and worth being in earnest about.

So much, then, for the teaching of the Scripture. We now ask what reason there is for the Church's attempt to state this faith in the form of a Creed.

I. A creed is a formal confession, and as such is man's answer to God's word. The Bible gives us the form of the message; we answer in our own words: "I believe," etc.; *i.e.*, I receive and adopt the message, and now give my understanding of it. It need not be a formal and studied reply, but for convenience we use that. Its object is not to produce faith, but to declare it. It is, even in its most ancient and most widely accepted form, not coordinate with the Bible, but subordinate to it. The Bible forever stands the norm of faith, the Creed is the rule of doctrine. It stands or falls according to its agreement with the Bible. We

make a confession because we find delight in expressing in definite and sufficient terms our acceptance of the truth given us of God; as Paul quotes the Psalmist: "I believed, and therefore did I speak." We make it also because our Lord constituted a public and express confession of himself the condition of acceptance in his kingdom. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10: 32).¹

The earliest suggestion of such a formal confession in the New Testament is Peter's reply to Jesus at Cæsarea Philippi: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This Jesus accepts and honors, and in so doing mentions for the first time the Church as the end and completion of his work on the earth. Before this in his conversation with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman, Jesus had made use of certain definite statements of truth, presenting them for formal acceptance. Later, on the way to the grave of Lazarus, he says to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11: 25, 26).

But as the Church was not organized until after the

¹ See Notes 1 and 2.

resurrection, we cannot look earlier for a creed. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to bring to remembrance his words, and gave the formula of baptism "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," as the intimation of the formal creed that would be needed after his death. Accordingly we find the apostles after Pentecost using a uniform and definite statement for the truths that were to be the foundation of the faith of the infant Church and the bond of its fellowship. Peter rehearses them, preaching in the beautiful gate of the temple; again before the high priest, and again in the presence of the council. In each case it is substantially the same confession. "The God of Abraham . . . hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up. . . . But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One . . . and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." John repeats the phrase "Jesus-Christ-come-in-the-flesh" as the substance of the Creed. "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." He says several times, "These are written, that ye may believe."

The earliest formal and general confession is in the fourth chapter of the Acts, where it is said that the assembled company "lifted up their voice to God with one accord" in the language there recorded, and which

was perhaps sung or chanted in unison. Dean Stanley finds in Paul's formal words in the passage beginning 1 Corinthians 15: 3, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," the first regular confession of the early Church. He says in this we have the original formula of the Apostles' Teaching. And this is confirmed by its similarity to parts of the creeds of the first three centuries, especially to that which under the name of the Apostles' Creed has been generally adopted in the West.¹

We must remember that while the Apostles' Creed is no piece of mosaic, but an organic unit, it was not a sudden crystallization of Christian doctrine under transient influences. It received emphasis and precision at a particular time, as the result of theological contest, but it had been known as a baptismal creed from the earliest days. The progress of the Church was continuous and coherent. We have Professor Zahn's authority for the statement that "the continuity of development from the day of the resurrection of Christ on to Irenæus is unquestionable." A creed, like a boundary line, is intended not to create a difference, but to record it. It draws the line between the Church and the world. Creeds naturally become fuller and more explicit as the points of difference be-

¹ See Note 3.

come more accurately known. In the earliest stage of the development of Christianity the unity of the Church was only what Hatch calls "a common relation to a common ideal and a common hope." Then came the period of heresies and conflicts and "the idea of a definite belief as a basis of union dominated over that of a holy life." Later it was not sufficient for a man to be living a holy life, holding the catholic faith, and belonging to a Christian society, but that society must also be "part of a larger confederation; and the sum of such confederations constituted the Catholic Church." This was the beginning of the tyranny of the Church and the inquisitory application of creeds which have wrought such infinite evil.

We need, perhaps, to-day, to reiterate Dr. Martineau's vigorous protest that "a second-hand belief, assented to at the dictation of an initiated expert, without personal response of thought or reverence in myself, has no more tincture of religion in it than any other lesson learned by rote." We would guard ourselves equally against hypocrisy and tyranny. But the point to observe is that there has been constant occasion for the Church's stating distinctly, on one important point or another, what she has learned in the Word of God, and therefore what she believes. God gives to no age any more of revelation than it is prepared to use, *i. e.*, enough to help it solve its own

problems, and to supply strength for its own immediate tasks. What if in the elation of doing this, it has often exulted in its new truths as all its own, forgetting its debt to the past and the possibility of God's having more truth yet to break forth for others! Progress has to be made in this way. There must necessarily remain the task of setting forth the contents of the gospel message in the language of current life and in relation to all other truth. The last word has by no means been spoken, and in every age the Church may well stand ready and expectant of new truth, and new statements of it, because of the place its own confessions have filled in the past.¹

II. We come now to another truth; that the power of the Christian faith is proportioned to the clearness with which it apprehends and the courage with which it proclaims its distinctive truths.

Religion rests, not on impressions, nor views, nor feelings, but on facts. Its power is the power of the truth known and believed. It need not always be stated in the same terms; the confessions of the Church have undergone continual modification with the varying phases of the conflict with the world and the devil, and with the continual modifications of human speech. But the substance of doctrine has not changed through the ages. The Church of to-day is in every essential the Church of the apostles, the

¹ See Notes 4 and 5.

Church of Jesus Christ. Its Creed now, as then, is but the restatement of the truth once for all delivered. When it has wandered, the Scripture has been the light by which it has found its way back; and, however ecclesiastical courts may have disagreed, the Church as a whole stands true to the contention that he only is a heretic who teaches what Christ never taught, and he is a schismatic whoever enjoins what Christ did not command.

But while the forms of statement have varied, the necessity for statement has not; and the power of a definite statement remains unchanged. The duty of being able to "give a reason for the faith that is in you" involves the duty of being able to state one's faith, and a clear statement of faith stands in close relations to the enthusiasm which makes the faith itself a moral force.

The creeds and confessions have been the focal points in the Church's history. The Nicene Creed was the confession under which the Church fought out her battle for the divinity of Christ, as the Athanasian was at a later day that in which she recorded her abiding grasp upon the doctrine of the Trinity. The Augsburg Confession was the bond of union among the German Reformers, as the Westminster Confession, with all its limitations, was among the Protestants of England; while our American ancestors bore

testimony to other friends beyond the sea of their loving fellowship, their sturdy independence, their undeviating devotion to the common faith, in the Cambridge Platform.¹

At each several period, the Church had a particular fight to wage. And her Confession marshalled her forces, and proclaimed and preserved her final victory. It would be easy to show that, in general, hostility to a creed is not so much hostility to the Confession of the truth, as hostility to the truth confessed. But this is not enough. Our contention is that the Confession itself has power. It gives efficiency to the truth. Garbett, in his Bampton Lectures, goes so far as to declare that the principles which are recognized as distinctive of Christian civilization are all referable to Christian dogmas, that is, to formal and positive statements of Christian truth; where the corresponding dogmas are unknown, the principles are unknown, and where the dogmas are preached, the principles have become influential. All the world over, wherever the gospel has been preached, under every diversity of race and climate, the same teaching has been followed by the same effects; and the activity of the influence is "exactly proportioned to the activity of the dogmatic belief." In other words, it is not the Church, but the truth which the Church possesses, that has the power.²

¹ See Note 6.

² Note 7.

It is sometimes asserted that doctrinal preaching has been, at one time and another, the occasion of the decay of the Church. But it is not true, except when it is understood of a narrow preaching of doctrine as something wholly apart from life—a mere strife about words. A purely ethical preaching is equally barren. Dorner, speaking of the decay of religion in the last century, says it was due to the fact that the pulpit limited itself to setting forth merely moral truths, and then adds: "Those ages in which morality alone has been most spoken of, have ever been those in which it has been least practised." The fact is that when the Church firmly grasps the great principles of her faith, then she has power against the world; and when she loses her hold upon them, or suffers them to fall into the background, then she suffers the shearing of her strength. Testimony to this effect is abundant. Harnack acknowledges that the strongest argument against his view of Ante-Nicene Christianity, namely, that through Greek influences it was largely a pagan secularization of the primitive faith, is that it is the old theology which produces "a deep knowledge of sin, true penitence, and a living Church activity." Dr. Martineau, the leader of Unitarianism in England, has lately spoken in confirmation of this, out of his own long experience; while Professor Allen, of Cambridge, a liberal Episcopalian, says that the fresh-

est impulses in recent religious thought are but a return to the well-known elements of the Nicene theology.¹

“What sort of religious faith is that,” exclaims an old Latin author, “which prohibits the declaration of what it holds to be true?” The Church has an aggressive and constructive work to do in the world. It is set here to compel men to take sides concerning Christ. It is not enough that it refute false ideas; its task is to replace them with true ideas. The Christian finds his influence and his peace in knowing what he believes, and in professing it. The faith that is silent as to what it believes has no just claim to a superior reverence for the sacredness of the truth; more often it is but “the drapery of a profound skepticism that lacks the courage to unveil itself before the eyes of men.” A heart that does not utter the truth it knows, is, as said the ancient Gower, but “a live coal under the ashes;” and a faith that will not declare itself, furnishes a strong presumption that it does not exist.²

III. The essential truth in all creeds is the confession of Christ. Professor Wendt, in his review of the teachings of Jesus, takes the position that the inner unity of the whole is so positive and so clear that the settling of this or that particular detail is comparatively unimportant. The same is true of the general

¹ See Notes 8 and 9.

² Note 10.

harmony of the creeds. "These are written," says John, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." The great fact to-day, the one that challenges the attention of the world, is Christianity, and Christianity is Christ. He has been the sum and substance of the Church's confession from the beginning. To him, and to him alone, it ascribes its power. Unbelief has recognized this, and has directed its efforts to undermining his claims, or to discrediting his story. Baur, Strauss, Rénan, Schenkel, have all had their day. The Christ of the New Testament remains the center and the sum of the confession of the Church.¹

The aim and value of the Creed, therefore, lie in this, its expressing for us all our personal surrender to Jesus as our Lord. It is not inspired as a dogma; it is not set forth as a final form, or made a test *ipsissimis verbis*; it is not offered for merely intellectual assault; but it represents the substance of the faith of Jesus as the Church has held it from the beginning. As such it is offered to the young convert as the expression of his new-found faith and the interpretation of his new experience, and it is set in the liturgy of our public worship as the unchanging confession of the Church's maturer knowledge. We are joined

¹ See Note 11.

together before all in this, that we are joined to Jesus Christ. We welcome to our fellowship all who love him. We respect the truth that may be given to others. We gladly try it, as we try our own, by its conformity to the Scripture. We proclaim, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." We say to the world, We have a confession because we have something that we believe. We hold that there is something worse than believing error, namely, believing nothing. And with the faith that is in us, and all the earnestness we can command, we strive to win others to the faith we believe, because we find that in it is life. It is no groping uncertainty, no feeling after God if haply we may find him. It is the established confidence of a soul that can say with reverence and truth, "My Lord and my God!" And with this glad confession, believing that in it is life both for this world and the world to come, we proclaim the truth we know, and invite all to accept it and find for themselves the same eternal life.¹

¹ See Notes 12 and 13.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX

CHAPTER I

NOTE 1. The originality of the Gospel does not consist so much in the novelty of certain dogmas or of certain moral precepts, as in the novelty of the foundation which it lays for the whole religious life. It does not present itself to the world as a system destined to replace older systems, but as a principle of life sufficiently powerful to change the nature itself of man.

REUSS: *Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne*, II, 602.

NOTE 2. "I"—a very short word, for in our language there is but one letter in it; a very common word, for we are saying it all day long when we are awake, and even at night in our dreams; and yet a very wonderful word, for though we know well whom it means, yet what it means we do not know and cannot understand, no, nor can the wisest philosopher who ever lived; and a most important word, too; for we cannot get rid of it, we cannot help thinking it, cannot help saying it all our life long from childhood to the grave. After death, too, we shall probably be saying that word to ourselves, each of us, forever and ever. If the whole universe, sun, moon and stars, and all that we ever thought of, or can think of, were destroyed and became nothing, that word would probably be left; and we should be left alone with it; and on what we meant by that little word would depend our everlasting happiness or misery.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: *Westminster Sermons*, 165.

NOTE 3. Personality is a being-for-self which apprehends itself as such, and distinguishes itself from others, which is not lost in the manifoldness of its modes of activity and expression, but abides, as a constant unity, with itself and in itself.

PFLEIDERER: *Die Ritschlianische Theologie*, 8.

NOTE 4. We have already noticed that the utilitarians were challenged to show how the happiness of another is as obligatory on every one as his own happiness, and that they were somewhat at a loss for an answer. The fact that there could be such a discussion proves at least that the obligation of altruism is no more obvious and immediate than the obligation of self-realization. But there is no occasion to debate the point for it is now agreed that the sympathetic feelings are as original and constitutional as the self-regarding feelings. The simple fact is that man is a person in society, and that he cannot be thought of apart from the reciprocal relations of the social organism. The feelings of affection are spontaneous and mutual services are indispensable. I am dependent on others and others are dependent on me. Humanity is inconceivable under any other conditions. No person can be started in life without the conscious cooperation of others and there can be no newcomers after us unless we invite their appearance. Altruism is laid down in the nature of man and even of animals. The foot cannot say to the hand, the child cannot say to the parent, the friend cannot say to the friend "I have no need of thee and thou hast no need of me." No doubt these necessities of reciprocity proceed, even on the physical ranges, in unconsciousness. Reproduction, nurture, education, depend upon preference and intelligent choice. Much more do the mutual services of society, economic, political, benevolent, require deliberate purpose. It is a strange contention of Mr. Kidd's that the efforts of individuals are selfish, competitive, greedy, and that altruism is a rare function of which individuals are not conscious, and which they cannot bring under rational justification. It could more reasonably be argued that actions for the good of others in the family and the State engage conscious and concentrated attention, and that actions for self are unreasoned and almost unconscious. But, whether self-regarding or altruistic actions are more distinct to consciousness, it is entirely certain that duties to others constitute a large portion of moral conduct.

Prof. GEO. HARRIS: *Moral Evolution*, 146.

NOTE 5. In a collection of Servian popular tales may be found one that runs somewhat as follows: Once there lived two brothers, of whom the elder was very incautious and wasteful but always lucky, so that in spite of himself he grew constantly richer, while the younger, although very industrious and careful, was invariably unfortunate, so that at last he lost everything, and had to wander out into the wide world to beg. The

poor wretch, after much suffering, resolved to go to no less a person than Fate himself, and to enquire wherefore he had been thus tormented. Long and dreadful wildernesses were passed, and finally the wanderer reached the gloomy house. Now visitors at Fate's dwelling dare not begin to speak when they come, but must wait until Fate shall address them, and meanwhile must humbly do after Fate whatever he does. So the wanderer had to live in the house for several days, silent, and busily imitating Fate's behavior. He found that Fate lives not always in the same way, but on some days enjoys a golden bed, with a rich banquet and untold heaps of treasure scattered about; on some days again is surrounded with silver, and eats dainty but somewhat plainer food; on some days has brazen and copper wealth only, with coarse food; and on some days, penniless and ragged, sleeps on the floor, digs the ground and gnaws a crust. Each night he is asked by a supernatural voice: "How shall those live who have this day been born?" Fate always replies: "As I have fared this day, so may they fare."

Thus our beggar found the secret of his own misfortunes; for he had been born on a day of poverty. But when at last Fate broke the silence, the visitor begged him to tell whether there could be any way whereby he might escape from the consequences of his unlucky birth. "I will tell thee," said Fate. "Get thee home again, and ask thy brother to let thee adopt his little daughter. For she was born on one of the golden days. Adopting her, thou shalt henceforth call whatever thou receivest her own. But never call anything thine. And so shalt thou be rich." The beggar joyfully left Fate's dreary house, with its sad round of days, and went back to the world of labor and hope. There, by following the advice that he had received, he became in fact very wealthy, since all that he undertook prospered. But the wealth was his adopted daughter's. For always he called his gains hers. One day he grew, however, very weary of this, and said to himself: "These fields and flocks and houses and treasures are not really hers. In truth I have earned them. They are mine." No sooner had he spoken the fatal words than lightning fell from heaven and began to burn his grain-fields, and the floods rose to drown his flocks. So that, terror-stricken, the wretch fell on his face and cried: "Nay, nay, O Fate, I spoke no truth; they are not mine, but hers, hers alone." And thereupon flame and flood vanished, and the man dwelt thenceforth in peace and plenty.

The really deep thought that imperfectly expresses itself in this little Servian tale may suggest many sorts of reflections. Just now we shall busy ourselves with only one of the ques-

tions that are brought to mind by the story. Many who nowadays have much to say about what they call altruism actually explain all altruism as a kind of selfish evasion of the consequences of cruder selfishness, so that at bottom they really counsel men much as Fate counselled the wanderer.

Prof. ROYCE: *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, 63.

NOTE 6. Man, says Kant, is in his typically rational activities, an End-in-himself. The life, that is to say, which is guided by the ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and which partially realizes these, possesses an absolute and indefeasible worth. Such a judgment represents a conviction so deep that we are prepared to stake everything upon it. Strictly speaking, such a conviction is not the result of argument, or a deduction from any philosophic system. It might rather be spoken of as an assumption, the fundamental assumption upon which all subsequent philosophizing must depend. Without this assumption of the infinite value and significance of human life, argument about God is simply waste of time. The man who does not start with this assumption—the man who can embrace the opposite alternative—is not accessible to any argument. For him the world has no serious meaning, and he himself has no serious function to discharge in it. He has denied his calling, or, as Fichte puts it, he has elected to be a thing and not a person. Of such an one it can only be said, He is joined to his idols, let him alone. Faith in God can only rest securely on the basal certainty of duty, and the view of human destiny and the universal purpose that springs therefrom.

Prof. SETH: *Two Lectures on Theism*, 63.

NOTE 7. The Right is determined by and is correlative to the Good. Obligation is the requirement we make of ourselves to realize the Good. I do not regard obligation as ultimate, in the sense that it is independent, that it is a conviction or sentiment which rests on nothing other than itself. Unless an ideal is perceived, there is no meaning in obligation. The good determines the right. In this respect, I am aware that I seem to differ from some ethical writers, who put the right first and endeavor to determine the good by the right, who maintain that the good is known by knowing what duty is. This relation is the reverse of the truth. The law which proclaims the right and prescribes duty is derived from the good to be realized. To turn the relation about is simply impossible. It is, therefore, found that those who discuss the right first and the good afterwards make implicit in the representation of the

right all that is subsequently made explicit in the exposition of the good. If duty is for the sake of duty, one thing might as well be required as another. An apt illustration given by Janet disposes of that notion: "A moral law which should require us to break stones without any object, for the sake simply of breaking our wills, would be a law void of all content, and consequently senseless. The recluses of the Thebaid, who tired themselves out in watering dead sticks, furnish us with a perfect illustration of a purely formal law, freed from every material object. Such an action might be useful as an ingenious apologue, by which the recluses constantly remind themselves of the vanity of human labor; but if we take it as the perfect type of morality, we fall into the absurd and impracticable."

Prof. GEO. HARRIS: *Moral Evolution*, 84.

NOTE 8. It is in the will, in purposive action, and particularly in our moral activity, as Fichte, to my mind, conclusively demonstrated, that we lay hold upon reality. All that we know might be but a dream procession of shadows, and the mind of the dreamer no more than the still mirror in which they are reflected, if indeed it were anything but the shifting shadows themselves. But in the purposive "I will," each man is real, and is immediately conscious of his own reality. Whatever else may or may not be real, this is real. This is the fundamental belief, around which skepticism may weave its maze of doubts and logical puzzles, but from which it is eventually powerless to dislodge us, because no argument can effect an immediate certainty—a certainty, moreover, on which our whole view of the universe depends.

Prof. SETH: *Two Lectures on Theism*, 46.

NOTE 9. The fact that the truth I reach is the truth for me, does not make it, on that account, less true. It is true so far as it goes, and if my experience can carry me no further, I am justified in treating it as an ultimate *until it is superseded*. Should it ever be superseded, I shall then see how it is modified by being comprehended in a higher truth, and also how it and no other statement of the truth could have been true at my former standpoint. But *before* that higher standpoint is reached, to seek to discredit our present insight by the general reflection that its truth is partial and requires correction, is a perfectly empty truth, which, in its bearing upon human life, must almost certainly have the effect of an untruth.

Prof. SETH: *Two Lectures on Theism*, 61.

NOTE 10. There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming. *And where faith in a fact can help create the fact*, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the "lowest kind of immorality" into which a thinking being can fall. Yet such is the logic by which our scientific absolutists pretend to regulate our lives!

Prof. JAMES: *The Will to Believe*, 29.

NOTE 11. When I look at the religious question as it really puts itself to concrete men, and when I think of all the possibilities which both practically and theoretically it involves, then this command that we shall put a stopper on our hearts, instincts and courage, and *wait*—acting of course meanwhile more or less as if religion were *not* true—till doomsday, or till such time as our intellect and senses working together may have raked in evidence enough—this command, I say, seems to me the queerest idol ever manufactured in the philosophic cave. Were we scholastic absolutists, there might be some excuse. If we had an infallible intellect, with its objective certitudes, we might feel ourselves disloyal to such a perfect organ of knowledge in not trusting to it exclusively, in not waiting for its releasing word. But if we are empiricists, if we believe that no bell in us tolls to let us know for certain when truth is in our grasp, then it seems a piece of idle fantasticality to preach so solemnly our duty of waiting for the bell. Indeed, we *may* wait if we will—I hope you do not think that I am denying that—but if we do so, we do so at our peril as much as if we believed. In either case we *act*, taking our life in our hands.

Prof. JAMES: *The Will to Believe*, 29.

NOTE 12.

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
 There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
 And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
 A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
 Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
 Wavered, then staggered backward hemmed by foes.
 A craven hung along the battle's edge
 And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
 That blue blade that the King's son bears—but this
 Blunt thing—!" He snapt and flung it from his hand,

And lowering crept away and left the field.
 Then came the King's son, wounded, sore bestead,
 And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
 Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
 And ran and snatched it; and with battle-shout
 Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
 And saved a great cause that heroic day.

E. R. SILL: "*Poems*," 1888.

CHAPTER II

NOTE 1.

"*Wer Gott nicht fühlt in sich und allen Lebens Kreisen,
 Denn werdet ihr ihn nicht beweisen mit Beweisen.*"

RUCKERT.

NOTE 2. We owe modern atheistic philosophy sincere thanks for having first made us vividly conscious how incomparably great a thing it is to affirm the existence of God.

ROTHE: *Stille Stunden*, 43.

NOTE 3. Certain spirits, by permission, ascended from hell, and said to me, "You have written a great deal from the Lord, write something also from us." I replied, "What shall I write?" They said, "Write that every spirit, whether he be good or evil, is in his own delight—the good in the delight of his good, and the evil in the delight of his evil." I asked them, "What may be your delight?" They said that it was the delight of committing adultery, stealing, defrauding and lying. I said, "Then you are like the unclean beasts." They answered, "If we are, we are."

SWEDENBORG: *Divine Providence*.

NOTE 4. God is greater and truer in our thoughts than in our words; he is greater and truer in reality than in our thoughts.

AUGUSTINE: *De Trinitate*, VII, 4, 7.

NOTE 5. Underlying a right conception of redemption is an adequate estimate of *sin*, and this connects itself, again, with

just views of the character and moral administration of God. The ordinary theology has a clear and coherent doctrine on this subject. Sin, in its view, is not simply moral transgression—deviation from, or falling below, the standard of duty, or ideal of right, accepted by the individual conscience—but involves essentially a Godward relation, and has respect to absolute law. This necessitates as its counterpart the view of God as the Source and Upholder of moral law, himself the ethically Good One, whose commanding will is the expression of his essential holiness, and whose administration is unchangeably directed to the maintenance of the good and the punishment of evil—the latter partly as a means to the recovery of the wrong-doer, but primarily as a reaction of his essential righteousness against that which infringes the moral order of the universe. Sin, in this view, is not that which must be or ought to be, but is a violation of the normal relation subsisting between God and his moral creatures; the rupture of an original bond between the soul and God; an evil which has entered through the culpable misuse of human freedom, and which entails on the race that has admitted it a heritage of depravity and woe. Corresponding with this conception of sin is the idea of *guilt*, as not merely the feeling of self-blame at conscious deviation from a standard of the mind's own; but as having relation likewise to absolute law, and expressing the sense of accountability to God and of liability to the just effects of his displeasure.

ORR: *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, 136, 137.

NOTE 6. The last and chief word in Lotze's system, however, is not found, any more than in Kant's, in his metaphysics. "The true beginning of metaphysics," he declares, "is not to be sought in this, but in ethics. . . . I seek in that which *should* be the ground of that which *is*." . . . With Kant, accordingly, he is in agreement in placing above knowledge the idea of the Good—supremely the *ethical* Good—and in seeking the ultimate principle of the explanation of the world in a "Highest-Good Personal," which he identifies with "Living Love." From this highest point of view, the world, in the whole compass of its relations, is regarded as originating from, and dependent upon, a principle of Creative Love, and as tending to a blessed end.

ORR: *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, 40.

NOTE 7. If God, as Ritschl admits, is the Creator, Upholder, and Moral Ruler of the universe—he whose will, purpose, attributes, are expressed in it—it is rationally incredible that it should not exhibit in its constitution and course some traceable indications of the Being and perfections of its Author. The absence of all such indications—if this were conceivable—would be a cogent argument for atheism.

ORR: *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, 253.

NOTE 8. Kant makes the recognition of a moral law within us fundamental and universal. He calls it the *categorical imperative*. Every man hears within the voice which says "I ought." It determines for him duty and right. In this voice is also "I can;" there is no "ought" without this. Hegel makes this voice the voice of God. The presence of reason within us is the presence of God. A progressive knowledge of the world about us as a continuous extension of our knowledge of God and the analysis of the structure of thought, is "the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence, before the creation of nature or a single human spirit."

NOTE 9. The prophet is in a peculiar sense the organ of Jehovah's will. He has listened in the council of the Almighty; he has stood, in vision, in the presence-chamber of the Most High, and heard there words which thrilled through his inmost being; he has felt within him the impulse, before which he quailed as at the lion's roar, or which consumed his bones as a hidden fire; he knows that Jehovah "doeth nothing but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets;" ever and anon as he speaks, it is "Thus saith Jehovah," "Hear ye the word of Jehovah," "'T is the oracle of Jehovah." If there are degrees of inspiration, the highest degree must surely be sought in those who thus constantly and unwaveringly declare the plenitude of their inspiration, and claim to bring directly to men the message of the Most High.

Prof. DRIVERS: *Sermons on Subjects Connected with the Old Testament*, 121.

NOTE 10. Now, seeing that the Hebrew word *Yahveh* appears in personal names only as *Yo*, *Yah*, or *Yahu*, and that Moses expressly states that *Yahveh* was a new name (Exod. 6: 3), (the ancient Hebrew name for God being *El Shaddai*) we are evidently warranted in making the following deductions:

firstly, that *Yahu* and *Yah* was the earlier form, and not a later abbreviation from *Yahveh*; and, secondly, that there were then thrown into a concrete shape ideas that had been current from the time of Abraham onwards, and a new significance imparted to this ancient name, by compounding it with the ancient Hebrew verb *hawaya*, equal to "to exist" (imperfect, or rather present, *yahvi*), thus transforming it into *Yahveh*, equal to "He exists, comes into existence, reveals himself."

Dr. FRITZ HOMMEL: *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments*, 114.

NOTE 11. *Yahveh* does not mean "He who strikes down" (*i. e.*, the God of battle or of lightning)—as the higher critics fondly imagine—but is an Arabic rather than a Hebrew (Canaanitish) form of the ancient verb *hawaya*, equal to Hebr. *hayah*, equal to "to be, to come into existence," and belongs to the very earliest language of the Hebrews, as spoken in the time of Abraham and Moses prior to the epoch of Canaanitish influence. In the later Hebrew idiom, which was employed from the time of the Judges onwards, the name *Yahveh* came to be pronounced more like *Yihyeh*, and is actually written as *Ehyeh*, equal to I will be, cf. Ex. 3: 14. In so far as form is concerned *Yahveh* stands in precisely the same relation to *yihyeh*, as *Yamlech* (1 Chron. 4: 34) does to the ordinary Hebrew verb-form *yimloch*. The names of the witnesses in the ancient Babylonian contract tablets of the time of Abraham bear witness, therefore, to the correctness of the traditional Biblical explanation of the All-holy name of *Yahveh*.

Dr. FRITZ HOMMEL: *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments*, 100.

NOTE 12. The name signifies *He who is*, according to Ex. 3: 14; more particularly, *He who is what he is*. But as it is not the notion of a lasting being which lies in the verb "hayah" but that of a moving existence, of becoming and occurring (comp. Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 3d ed. p. 31 [4th ed. p. 26]), so also the form of the name derived from the imperfect leads us to understand in it the existence of God, not as an existence at rest, but as one always becoming, always making itself known in a process of becoming. Hence it is wrong to find in the name the abstract notion of being. God is rather *Jahve* in as far as he has entered into historical relationship to mankind, and

in particular to the chosen people of Israel, and shows himself continually in this historical relationship as he who is, and who is what he is. While heathenism rests almost exclusively on the past revelations of its divinities, this name testifies, on the other hand, that the relationship of God to the world is in a state of continual living activity; it testifies, especially in reference to the people who address their God by this name, that they have in their God a future.

OEHLER: *Theology of the Old Testament*, I, 139.

CHAPTER III

NOTE 1. The name El Shaddai should be considered the only one in use in patriarchal times. This word is meant to denote God as the absolutely mighty One whom no other could withstand, so that his followers may fearlessly and confidently trust in him, may build their faith upon him.

SCHULTZ: *Old Testament Theology*, II, 130.

NOTE 2. And why does Jehovah reveal himself (Gen. 17:1) as God Almighty? The critics rob this of all its significance by making it merely the customary patriarchal denomination of the Most High. But why does this name appear here for the first time? And why in the subsequent employment of it in Genesis is there an almost invariable reference to this occasion and to the promises here made? Why this appeal to the divine omnipotence enhancing the sense of the magnitude of the promise, and of the might involved in bringing it to pass? Considered as the first utterance of the promise to Abram, the simple word of the Most High should be sufficient to awaken faith in a believing soul, as in 12:1-4. And it would seem superfluous to precede it by an affirmation of his almighty power. But if the promise had been made long years before, and repeated from time to time, while yet no sign of its accomplishment appeared, and every natural prospect had vanished, and there was danger that faith, so long vainly expectant, might weaken or utterly die, unless attention was explicitly directed to the limitless strength of Him by whom the promise was given, then there was a gracious and most important end to be answered by this form of the divine communication, and we can see why

Jehovah's first word to Abram on this occasion should be "I am God Almighty."

Prof. GREEN: *The Unity of the Book of Genesis*, 221.

NOTE 3. Cyril of Jerusalem explains the word at length and points its force against those who held false views about the material universe. "The heretics," he says, "know not One All-sovereign God. For All-sovereign is he who sways all, who has authority over all. But they that say that one is Lord of the soul and some other of the body, say that neither of them is perfect, by the fact that one part is lacking to each. For he that hath authority over the soul but hath no authority over the body, how is he All-sovereign? and he that is lord over bodies but hath no authority over spirits, how is he All-sovereign?"

Gregory of Nyssa in the course of his interpretation of the title says: "Just as there would have been no physician had there been no sick . . . so there would have been no universal Sovereign unless all the Creation had required One to exercise sovereignty over it and keep it in being. . . . Therefore, whenever we hear the word 'All-sovereign,' we have this thought, that God holds together all things in being, both things intelligible and things material. For it is for this reason he holds the circle of the earth, for this reason he keeps in his hand the ends of the earth, for this reason he encloses the heaven with his span, for this reason he measures the water with his hand, for this reason he embraces all the intelligible creation in himself, that all things may remain in being since they are swayed by his embracing power."

In this respect the title "All-sovereign" stands in a significant contrast to "world-sovereign," which is applied to adverse powers, who hold at present a partial and permitted (Luke 4:6) sway. So Scripture recognizes the disorder of the world as it falls under our present observation, but points to a larger view and an ultimate fulfilment of life which corresponds with the perfect will of God.

WESTCOTT: *The Historic Faith*, 212, 222.

NOTE 4. As Abraham had gone forth from the culture of Babylon to enter upon the pilgrimage life of believing in communion with *El Shaddai*, so Moses went forth from the culture of Egypt to become the representative of *Jahveh*, and organize

a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a theocracy, the vital principles of which became reverential fear and worship of the personal God of the covenant.

BRIGGS: *Biblical Study*, 50.

NOTE 5. The conclusion seems well justified, that, with the use of the name Jahveh, the idea seized the mind of Moses and his successors that the God they worshiped was one of ever-developing potency, an ever self-manifesting, ever actively-defending God, whose character was not so much denoted by a quality as by a constant activity, or rather (judged by the analogy of similar personal names) by a person ever active; that, in fact, as a nation does not die, so their national God would ever be with them. The name comes in at a definite historical crisis in the nation's life, and was meant to indicate that the deity so named was concerned, not merely with natural phenomena, but with national and historical events.

ROBERTSON: *The Early Religion of Israel*, 286.

NOTE 6. The God of pre-Mosaic times is the same God in fuller manifestation still. Moses, says Prof. A. B. Davidson, "stamped an impress upon the people of Israel which was never effaced, and planted seeds in the mind of the nation which the crop of thorns that sprang up after his death could not altogether choke. Of course, even he did not create a nation or a religious consciousness in the sense of making it out of nothing. When he appealed to the people in Egypt in the name of Jehovah, their God, he did not conjure with an abstraction or a novelty. The people had some knowledge of Jehovah, some faith in him, or his name would not have awakened them to religious or national life. In matters like this, we never can get at the beginning. The patriarchal age, with its knowledge of God, is not altogether a shadow, otherwise the history of the exodus would be a riddle. Moses found materials, but he passed a new fire through them, and welded them into a unity; he breathed a spirit into the people, which animated them for all time to come; and this spirit can have been no other than the spirit that animated himself."

ROBERTSON: *The Early Religion of Israel*, 288.

NOTE 7. It is in itself more likely that such a name was not *invented* but simply *found* by Moses. We may, therefore, infer that just as before Mahomet the name Allah was by no

means unusual among his people, although put into the shade by the individual deities, so in Israel also this name must have been an ancient name of God, but that it now obtained quite a new significance as the name of the one national God, the covenant God of Israel. For that Jehovah was the God of Israel, from the bondage in Egypt onwards, is a very old tradition.

It is certain that, since the time of Moses, the name Jahve is the proper name of the covenant God of Israel. It implies something personal and moral. God is a personal Being, possessed of independent will, under no foreign influence, and consequently unchangeable, absolutely true to himself, and to his own Being. Whoever has God has on his side not merely irresistible power but also the trustworthy, faithful God, whose will, once revealed, can no longer be limited and changed from without. It is by this declaration that the highest conception of God in the Old Testament religion is first revealed. Till God unveils himself in the New Testament as the Father of the Son, nothing higher is said of him than that he is Jahve in the above sense of that word.

SCHULTZ: *Old Testament Theology*, II, 137, 138.

NOTE 8. The combination in 1 Sam. 17:45, of "the Lord of hosts" and "the God of the armies of Israel," testifies that the two names do not signify the same thing. A higher notion must be involved in the former, namely this, that the fact that the God of the armies of Israel is also the Lord of hosts makes him so terrible a God. A similar relation exists in Ps. xxiv between vers. 8 and 10. From the Lord mighty in battle, the psalm rises to the God of hosts; the thought in the tenth verse corresponding with that in the first: so that the ode celebrates the God of Israel as God of the world both in its opening and conclusion. This more general meaning of the name is maintained by a second view, which, referring to Gen. 2:1, understands the expression "Sabaoth" as applying to the *creatures in general*, who in their entirety compose the great army of the Lord. Thus it is the general sovereignty of God, as effectively manifested in all creation, of which he alone has the disposal, which is impressed upon this name.

OEHLER: *The Theology of the Old Testament*, II, 272.

NOTE 9. But the emphasis with which the name is used to assert the majesty of God, and the use of the word Sabaoth in the absolute, make it probable that the pious did not think, in the first instance, of earthly hosts when they described God

as the Lord of hosts. The eye of believing Israel saw God surrounded with his heavenly hosts, with chariots of fire and horses of fire, whose warrior princes are angels of the highest rank. When this people was prosecuting its wars, it saw in its God the heavenly Helper, who, by the might of his heavenly hosts, assured his followers of victory. To the eye of faith, the hosts of heaven and earth formed but a single army.

SCHULTZ: *Old Testament Theology*, II, 141.

NOTE 10. First, in regard to the religion of the Patriarchal Period, the divine name is El, employed even at that date to the exclusion of other gods, which only very gradually made their way in from Babylon; it appears also in another name for God at the time, El Shaddai, in South Palestine El-'Elyôn: then we have the reform introduced by Moses in connection with the ancient divine appellation Ai or Yah; the original meaning of this name had long been lost sight of, but by transforming it into Yahveh (equal to He who exists), it is invested, in the account given by Moses, with a new significance; next came the stormy era of the struggle between the cult of Yahveh and the Canaanite cult of Baal, a struggle which would probably have terminated with a compromise had it not been for the intervention of Samuel and the other prophets, who were not only enabled to preserve the worship of Yahveh from contamination, but re-instated it also on such a permanent basis that it successfully withstood frequently renewed efforts of the kings of Israel to effect a compromise.

HOMMEL: *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments*, 223.

NOTE 11. Since the time of Hosea, it is true, the term "Father," as applied to God, is often found in the prophets. But it either describes God's special love to Israel and, in that case, is not so much a name of God as a description of his covenant-fellowship with his people. In this sense the term is the foundation of the doctrine of Jesus regarding God as his Father. Or else, where the word occurs without any such nearer limitation, it refers to God solely as the great First Cause and the supreme Ruler, so that nothing more is implied than in the term "Lord." Consequently, as a real, divine name, this word does not take us beyond the ordinary Old Testament doctrine of God.

SCHULTZ: *Old Testament Theology*, II, 138.

NOTE 12. For ages men had longed to call God "Father," but the aspiration appeared to be a vague and visionary hope. They strove to divest themselves in imagination of all that is material and mortal, if so be that some unsubstantial spirit might be left not wholly alien from a divine kindred. They unclothed themselves, to use St. Paul's expressive image, of all that belongs to the fulness of personal life, that even so, shadowy and phantomlike, they might be admitted to a heavenly fellowship. The passionate craving remained when every attempt to satisfy it failed. It seemed as if God were withdrawn more and more from the world as experience gave precision to thought, and yet men clung to the belief that they were indeed his offspring. They knew that God only could know God. They knew that men only could be touched with the feeling for man's infirmities. In the face of this final contradiction they hoped still; and the hope was not vain.

Christ, the Son of God, the Son of man, reconciled what had been held to be irreconcilable. As Son of God, he knew the Father perfectly. As Son of man he revealed the Father perfectly. In his own Person he offered the supreme proof of the Father's love by taking man's nature upon earth. In his own Person he offered the supreme pledge of man's divine sonship by raising his nature to heaven. In a word, he declared the Father's name; he declared that we are not simply poor, frail creatures of a day, but heirs of an eternal inheritance. He declared that helpless, erring, sin-stained as we are, we can yet be brought back, cleansed through his blood, to our true home; he declared that in him we too even now may see the Father.

WESTCOTT: *The Revelation of the Father*, 9.

NOTE 13. Such a revelation of the divine Fatherhood through the Son to sons definitely distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God from Pantheism and Theism. As against Pantheism it shows God as distinct from and raised immeasurably above the world; as against Theism it shows God as entering into a living fellowship with men, as taking humanity into personal union with himself. The unseen King of the divine Kingdom is made known as one to whom his people can draw near with the confidence of children.

WESTCOTT: *The Historic Faith*, 212.

NOTE 14. That place of refuge for those who, to whatever creed they belong, long for something better, finer, older and truer than what they can find stated in the services, sacrifices

and sermons of the days in which their lot on earth has been cast. . . . Each will bring to this what he values most—his pearl of great price—the Hindu his innate disbelief in this world, his unhesitating belief in another world: the Buddhist his perception of an eternal law, his submission to it, his gentleness, his pity; the Mohammedan, if nothing else, at least his sobriety; the Jew his clinging, through good and evil days, to the one God who loveth righteousness and whose name is "I am"; the Christian that which is better than all, if those who doubt it would only try it, our love of God, call him what you like, the Infinite, the Invisible, the Immortal, the Father, the highest self, above all and through all and in all,—manifest in our love of man, our love of the living, our love of the dead, our living and undying love.

MAX MUELLER: *Hibbert Lectures*, close.

CHAPTER IV

NOTE 1. Rothe's explanation of *Cosmos* is: "Als zweckvoll gedachte *universitas rerum*,"—the universe considered as full of purpose, *i. e.*, God's plan for it.

NOTE 2. Of transcendent and immovable being we shall endeavor to prove the existence, and such a nature, if it finds place in the world of reality, may be said to constitute the domain of Deity, and to be itself a first and regnant principle.

ARISTOTLE: *Metaphysics*, x. c. vii.

NOTE 3. It is a work that requires our choicest thoughts, the exactest discussion that can be, a thing very natural and desirable, to give unto reason the things that are reason's and unto faith the things that are faith's; to give faith her full scope and latitude, and to give reason also her just bounds and limits; this is the first-born, but the other has the blessing.

NATHANIEL CULVERWELL: *Light of Nature*, 1.

NOTE 4. The Energy which had always existed, the "Wisdom" which was "from the beginning, or ever the earth was," now are by transference changed into material things, and into the laws which regulate their movements. The idea of forming something out of nothing is to be understood by ac-

commodation to our methods of thought. "The worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." There was no material thing at the beginning, and therefore the creation was out of no thing apprehensible by our senses. The analogy proves this by retrogression. As we go back toward the beginning of time we find, according to the best results of science, the solid earth to be in a molten state, even as its center, held in by the hard crust on the outside, and its oblate sphericity, now clearly indicate. No substances, even the most obdurate rocks and refractory metals, existed then, save in a state of fusion. Still earlier they were in the form of an immeasurably heated and expanded gas. Yet earlier we have the star-dust floating in space, no nearer perhaps to the subtlety of the Spiritual Essence than the ether which now fills the interstellar regions is to the heaviest substance known to science. We follow the process backward till imagination wearies; but the processes of nature do not stop where we find ourselves unable to travel even in thought. If, therefore, matter is eternal, it was at one time in such a degree of subtlety that by no thought of ours could it be distinguished from pure spirit or energy. This view is in strict accordance with the most advanced theory of mechanical cosmology; and we are prepared to accept it, because we perceive that it is perfectly reconcilable with the most orthodox theistic system revealed in what purports to be the Word of God.

* * * * *

The world is full of mysteries as insoluble as the method by which is wrought the change of force into matter, and back again from material into force, which does its work and then seems to be destroyed, but is absolutely indestructible. In truth the whole business of scientific knowledge, nay, of every species of knowledge, is the investigation and classification of phenomena which are the expression of this alternate transmutation.

Prof. J. COOPER: *Creation*,—Article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1898, 234, 235, 242.

NOTE 5. My position is that there were *two possible planets*, either of which might have caused the observed irregular motions of Uranus. Each planet excluded the other; so that, if one was, the other was not. They coincided in direction from the earth at certain epochs, once in six hundred and fifty years. It was at one of these epochs that the prediction was made; and at no other time for six centuries could the prediction of one planet have revealed the other.

The observed planet was not the predicted one. It was excluded through the limitations which had been determined by Leverrier himself, after a prodigious outlay of profound and ingenious research. He had proclaimed the investigation of the limits as essential to the full solution of the problem. It was certainly its larger moiety, and most intricate portion; and he had worthily solved it. It is inconceivable how the great master can have consented to abandon his choicest production and most brilliant jewel to popular applause and its ignoble bribery. The potential planet is as splendid a reality as the true planet, and as marvelous a discovery.

PIERCE: *Ideality in the Physical Sciences*, 173.

NOTE 6. Molecules measure somewhat between one twenty-five millionth and one twenty-five hundred millionth of an inch. The velocity of the atoms or molecules of hydrogen is six hundred feet per second at zero centigrade, *i. e.*, six times that of a cannon-ball, and each undergoes at ordinary temperature and pressure eighteen thousand million knocks from other molecules every second.

EDMUND LEDGER: *Gresham Lecture on Astronomy*.

NOTE 7. The intensity of chemical action can be measured by the enormous liberation of energy attending it. Expressed in mechanical terms, the combustion of one pound of hydrogen with eight of oxygen is equivalent to the lifting of a mass of forty-seven million pounds one foot from the ground; and the same force would be required for the decomposition of the nine pounds of water resulting from it. As Prof. Tyndall said, "The force of gravity as exerted near the earth is almost a vanishing quantity in comparison with these molecular forces."

Report of Prof. Dewar's Experiments, Edinburgh Review.

NOTE 8. In the heavens we discover by their light [the light of molecules], and by their light alone, stars so distant from each other that no material thing can ever have passed from one to another; and yet this light, which is to us the sole evidence of the existence of these distant worlds, tells us also that each of them is built up of molecules of the same kinds as those which we find on earth. A molecule of hydrogen, for example, whether in Sirius or in Arcturus, executes its vibrations in precisely the same time.

* * * * *

No theory of evolution can be formed to account for the similarity of molecules, for evolution necessarily implies con-

tinuous change, and the molecule is incapable of growth or decay, of generation or destruction.

None of the processes of Nature, since the time when Nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. We are therefore unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules or the identity of their properties to any of the causes which we call natural.

On the other hand, the exact equality of each molecule to all others of the same kind gives it, as Sir John Herschel has well said, the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent.

* * * * *

But though in the course of ages catastrophes have occurred and may yet occur in the heavens, though ancient systems may be dissolved and new systems evolved out of their ruins, the molecules out of which these systems are built—the foundation-stones of the material universe—remain unbroken and unworn. They continue this day as they were created—perfect in number and measure and weight; and from the ineffaceable characters impressed on them we may learn that those aspirations after accuracy in measurement, and justice in action, which we reckon among our noblest attributes as men, are ours because they are essential constituents of the image of Him who in the beginning created, not only the heaven and the earth, but the materials of which heaven and earth consist.

Prof. JAMES CLERK MAXWELL: *Life*, 358-361.

NOTE 9. As the lover and companion of flowers, the butterfly is a botanist *par excellence*, and as ally of the Infinite, a botanist divine. But it is not with either of these functions, so ably dwelt upon by more learned pens than mine, that I am at present concerned. In another, more literal and prosaic, perhaps, but equally marvellous resource—the scientific classification of species—the butterfly has proven a prehistoric antecedent to the fathers of botany, and an oracle not sufficiently regarded in later times. Botanical history is full of learned dissensions among the wise heads, upon the botanical affinities of this or that non-committal plant, whether it should be placed here or there among the natural orders. How many a martyr blossom has served but as a shuttlecock in the learned mêlée, tossed back and forth for years ere it found its final rest among its congenial kindred, while a mere appeal to the butterfly might long ago have solved the problem and brought immediate peace!

HAMILTON GIBSON: *Strolls by Starlight*, 124.

NOTE 10. In fact the whole process of evolution is the manifestation of a Power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man. As little in our days as in the days of Job can man by searching find out this Power. Considered fundamentally, then, it is by the operation of an insoluble mystery that life on earth is evolved, species differentiated, and mind unfolded from their prepotent elements in the immeasurable past.

Prof. TYNDALL: *Fragments of Science*, II, 195.

NOTE 11. We conceive, in examining the work of those to whom we owe our knowledge of the laws of nature, and especially of the wider and more comprehensive laws, that such persons have been strongly and habitually impressed with the persuasion of a divine purpose and power which had regulated the events which they had attended to, and ordained the laws which they had detected. When they had just read a sentence of the table of the laws of the universe they could not doubt whether it had had a legislator. When they had deciphered in them a comprehensive and substantial truth, they could not believe that the letters had been thrown together by chance; they could not but readily acknowledge that what their faculties had enabled them to read, must have been written by some higher and profounder mind.

WHEWELL: *Astronomy and Natural Theology*, 307.

NOTE 12. The act of creation, according to this theory, is the change of spiritual energy into its equivalent mechanical force, and this is transmuted farther until it becomes embodied in matter for its phenomenal action. God was from eternity all in all; the only substance, essence, power, intelligence, goodness combined: the Many united in the absolute One. He contains within himself potentially whatever was at any time, past, present or future, in spiritual or material form. For whatever he could do by his almighty power was actually summed up in his being. Therefore any change of form that this might be made to assume—and it could be made to assume any by his determination—was simply a transmutation, a change of form, a materializing and localizing of that which already existed in him.

By this view the doctrines of revealed religion come into complete harmony with the fundamental principles of science. There is no other doctrine of science which so completely un-

derlies and supports the structure of physical knowledge as the conservation of force, with its kindred principle, the transference of energy. These are the corner-stones of every system of inductive science. They are the middle terms of reasoning, and must be assumed in every form of philosophic thought. Any scheme of theistic cosmology must assume that all was potentially in God, and that in creation this potentiality became actualized, by some process, in material which is apprehensible by the senses. Creative energy went out from him at his command, and was transformed into a universe of matter and spirit, of intelligence and goodness. The One becomes the Many; and all, like their Source, were very good. Each portion of energy becomes a separate individual, a *monad*, a microcosm, a perfect organization in itself. Each was endowed with a spirit proper to its sphere of action. Yet all were united by the golden chain which reaches not only from earth to heaven, but to the most distant star in the firmament, and binds them together in an organic whole.

Prof. J. COOPER: Creation,—Article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1898, 240, 241.

NOTE 13.

Be not thou enticed by the wisdom of the Greeks,
Which bears only fair blossoms, but never fruit.
What is the essence thereof? That God created not the world,
And that ever from the first it was wrapped in myths.
If to such words thou lendest a willing ear,
Thou shalt return with a talkative mouth, the heart void and
unsatisfied.

JEHUDA HALEVI, Jewish poet of the 12th century.

CHAPTER V

NOTE 1. We may overlook and cloud the fact of the Incarnation with subordinate doctrine, with the theories and traditions of men, with a disproportionate mass of guesses on what it has not been given us to know, of subtleties and reasonings in the sphere of human philosophy; we may recoil from it and put it from us as something which oppresses our imagination and confounds our reason; but we may be sure that on the place which we really give it in our mind and heart depends the

whole character of our Christianity, depends what the gospel of Christ means to us.

CHURCH: *Pascal and Other Sermons*, 182.

NOTE 2. The fact that men strictly trained in Judaism, like Paul, give, in their writings, to Christ such high divine predicates, which stand in direct contradiction with strict Jewish monotheism, remains inexplicable, unless we presume a total and overmastering change of their religious views, by which they were transposed into an entirely new element of life and thought. There wants not, indeed, from the beginning, an *objective* doctrine of the nature of Christ. His declarations concerning himself would be transmitted; for the two statements stand connected, "I believe, therefore have I spoken," and "Faith itself cometh by preaching." But this doctrine came to be spiritually appropriated first in the following way: They had experienced Christianity as a divine history of their inner being; believing in Christ, they had obtained access to God, in the Son they had found the Father. In this innermost, most certain fact of their consciousness, there lay the necessity to place the person of Christ, the *founder* of this their new life, in the most vital relation to the Father. In this, all Christians were at one; but the first preachers of Christianity, no less than Christians of the following times, differed from each other as to the measure of knowledge they possessed of the relation between God and Christ.

DORNER: *Doctrine of Person of Christ*, DIV. I, Vol. 1, 47.

NOTE 3. Wisdom literature had been current for more than two hundred years, and Plato's elaborate system was wrought out forty or fifty years before the Fourth Gospel was written. The apostle did not adopt the word *Logos* because he was himself inventing some recondite system of speculation concerning the person of Christ. He adopted it as a term of current philosophical speech, in order by its use to adapt his idea of Christ's pre-existence and divinity to the minds of his Greek readers. The personification of the divine Word in the Old Testament is poetical, in Philo metaphysical, in John historical. . . . It is as if John had said to his readers, You are familiar with the speculations which have long been rife respecting the means whereby God reveals himself—the doctrine of an intermediate agent through whom he communicates his light and life to men. The true answer to the question regarding this medium is that it is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's agent in revelation; he is the band which unites heaven and earth.

STEVENS: *The Johannine Theology*, 86.

NOTE 4. Thus, when the mind now strove to conceive no longer the simple idea of the one God *Jahveh*, but the complex idea of the person of Christ and the Trinity therein involved, the Hebrew language was entirely inadequate, and the Greek, as the most capable, must be strained and tried, tried to the utmost, to convey the idea of the *Logos*, who was in the beginning, was with God and was God and yet became the Word incarnate, the God-man, the interpreter in complete humanity of the fullness of the Deity dwelling in him; for notwithstanding the historical preparation for this conception in the theophanies of the Hebrews, the *nous* of Plato, the *logos* of Philo and the wisdom of Solomon and Sirach, it was yet an entirely new conception which, notwithstanding the preparation of the Hebrew and the Greek, the world could not appropriate without the transforming and enlightening influence of the Spirit of God.

BRIGGS: *Biblical Study*, 71.

NOTE 5. The early Apologists and Fathers may have given—no doubt did give—too intellectualistic a cast to their Logos speculations; but the Logos doctrine which they defended, with the transcendental view of the Person of Christ which it implied, was no product of Greek philosophy, but an element of Apostolic teaching, to which, in their controversies with the Ebionitic, Monarchian, Arian, and other heretical tendencies of their day, these fathers of the Church did well to be faithful. It is significant that, in a recent utterance, Kaftan formally discards the whole Logos conception of the Fourth Gospel as unsuitable to Christianity. If the doctrines in question are to be assailed, it should be frankly recognized that the blow falls, not solely on the theology of the Greek fathers who but fought with the best means at their disposal for what they conceived to be the vital issues of the Christian faith, but on the theology of the New Testament itself.

ORR: *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, 194.

NOTE 6. Strictly speaking it is not at all a doctrine of Christ that they proclaim, for then they would have occupied themselves with the questions concerning the inner relations of the Father and the Son, the correct representation of the transition of the Son out of an eternal and divine existence into a human and temporal one, the relation of the Son to the Father in the com-

pleted kingdom of God, with which the doctrinal development of the Church has busied itself so much. It is rather historical facts which they declare, only they are not facts which can be proved and established in a scientific manner, but facts which are to be received by faith, and which must prove themselves true to the religious experience, facts the central point of which declares indeed the unique greatness of the person of Christ presented to faith, and the continuous religious significance of his work.

Their message presents itself with the claim to be a message from God which demands credence; they know themselves to be illumined and led by the Spirit of God when they announce this message, and to possess in this Spirit the power to confirm its infallibility. There is, therefore, in the last analysis, no other proof for the establishing of this claim than one's own experience of the truth of their teaching, that is, in the renewing and confirming of the religious and moral life as well as in the peace of the soul and the certainty of future bliss, gained in this way.

Here a test is found for the modern views which lie at the foundation of the many new representations of the life of Christ. We are told that in order rightly to understand the nature of Christianity, we must go back from the apostles' doctrine of Christ to the teachings of Christ himself; by an historical investigation of the life of Christ, a new standpoint is to be won for that which Jesus was and wished; in order so to separate that which first appeared in the apostolic teaching as the result of influences appearing in their own times arising from varying conceptions of the person and work of Christ. A true historical and critical investigation must declare the complete uselessness of this attempt. What we possess of the traditions of the life of Christ concerning his words and deeds goes back in some form or other to the testimony of the apostles who continually attended him during his earthly life. If right in the beginning erroneous representation of the person and work of Christ had appeared, it is inconceivable that these should not in an extensive way have influenced their accounts of what they had seen and heard; and where finally between our written gospels and their recollections the medium of oral tradition appears, they could only have been shaped by the representations which came down from the apostolic preaching. But for the separation of those influences and these reshapings, we lack every fixed standard, and therefore it is not to be wondered at, if that process of separation is seen to be undertaken entirely from a subjective standpoint and according to philosophical axioms which are altogether outside

of historical research. But, most important of all, one thing is overlooked. At the foundation of the collected apostolic testimony lies the presupposition that the work of Christ in its entirety was not completed in his earthly life; that this is rather only the preparation and commencement of a work which with new agencies and with enlarging results will be pushed forward by the ascended Christ, and only completed in the time to come.

BERNHARD WEISS: *Das Leben Jesu*, v. I, 10.

NOTE 7. It is an illustration of this unity of human life with that of the divine that Jesus repeatedly sets himself forth in mystical language as the food of the soul, the bread that came down from heaven. And if at times his language grows more striking than our colder western imaginations often venture, and indeed becomes a hard saying even to his disciples, he instantly explains his analogy in terms that are at once profound and intelligible. The same is true of the symbolical teaching of the Eucharist. So great and essential did this relationship appear to the earliest Church that the whole significance of Jesus as a mere ethical teacher is overtopped by it, and in the writings of Paul and John it becomes the leading conception of both the person and the influence of the Christ. He was the incarnate God—the perfect realization of this capacity for union between the human and divine, and at the same time the channel through whom the race itself might be brought into union with God, that it might enjoy those blessings promised God's sons. Indeed, it is not too much to say that Christianity as a system is but an unfolding of the conception of the Godward social capacities of mankind. From this point of view the cardinal doctrines of the incarnation,—faith, atonement, justification, and immortality,—cease to be abstract, and appear rather the formulation of actual religious experience, and the description of psychical possibilities and phenomena.

SHAILER MATHEWS: *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, 30-31.

NOTE 8. In the Arian age it was not enough to say that Jesus Christ is God, because the Arians had contrived to impoverish and degrade the idea conveyed by the name of God so completely as to apply that sacred word to a creature. Of course, if it had been deemed a matter of sheer indifference whether Jesus Christ is or is not God, it would have been a practical error to have

insisted on the truth of his real divinity, and an equivocal expression might have been allowed to stand. If the Church of Christ had been not the school of revealed truth, in which the soul was to make knowledge the food and stimulant of love, but a world-wide debating club, "ever seeking and never coming to the knowledge of the truth," it would then have been desirable to keep this and all other fundamental questions open. Perhaps, in that case, the Nicene decision might with truth have been described as "the greatest misfortune that has happened to Christendom." But the Church believed herself to possess a revelation from God, essential to the eternal well-being of the soul of man. She further believed that the true Godhead of Jesus Christ was a clearly-revealed truth of such fundamental and capital import that, divorced from it, the creed of Christendom must perish outright. Plainly, therefore, it was the Church's duty to assert this truth in such language as might be unmistakably expressive of it. Now this result was secured by the Homoousion. It was at the time of its first imposition, and it has been ever since, a perfect criterion of real belief in the Godhead of our Lord. It excluded the Arian sense of the Word of God, and on this account it was adopted by the orthodox. How much it meant was proved by the resistance which it then encountered, and by the subsequent efforts which have been made to destroy or to evade it. The sneer of Gibbon about the iota which separates the semi-Arian from the Catholic symbol (Homoiousion from Homoousion) is naturally repeated by those who believe that nothing was really at stake beyond the emptiest of abstractions, and who can speak of the fourth century as an age of meaningless logomachies. But to men who are concerned not with words, but with the truths which they enshrine, not with the mere historic setting of a great struggle, but with the vital question at issue in it, the full importance of the Nicene symbol will be sufficiently obvious. The difference between Homoiousion and Homoousion convulsed the world for the simple reason that in that difference lay the whole question of the real truth or falsehood of our Lord's actual divinity.

LIDDON: *Bampton Lectures*, 1866, 434, 435.

NOTE 9. The real interests at stake in the Arian controversy were those of the Christian religion, not of any particular system of philosophy. The question of the age was whether the redemption of humanity had actually been affected by One who was God, and if so, what was his relation to the God of Christian monotheism. The conception of the Son or Logos as a distinct hypostasis, which had been developed in the struggles of

the third century, must now be adjusted with the ancient and continuous affirmation of his true deity.

* * * * *

The leading defenders [of Arianism] understood the art of popularizing their doctrine. In itself it had the merit of simplicity, and early in the controversy Arius composed the *Thalia* ("spiritual banquet"), a collection of songs for popular use. This publication led to a general and terrible irreverence. The lowest classes became familiarized with the most sacred language and doctrines, hitherto only imparted under the discipline of reserve by the Church. Christian divisions became a laughing-stock of the theatres. Profane questions were asked of women and boys in the streets. "Quarrels took place in every city and village concerning the Divine dogma, the people looking on and taking sides." In the court, in private houses, in public thoroughfares, in shops and market-places, there was a "war of dialectics."

In the second (post-Nicene) stage of the quarrel much was due to court influence. After Nicæa, the Eusebian party became merely a secular faction, dependent on the favor of the emperor. "All authorities," says Mr. Gwatkin, "are agreed that Arian successes began and ended with Arian command of the palace." The policy of the party was to secure control, by sheer violence or by cunning intrigues, of all the leading episcopal sees; a plan which they successfully accomplished in the East, though they never obtained any real hold upon the West. Further, Arianism commended itself to heathen philosophers by its abstract and transcendental conception of God; its antithesis of being "create" and "increate"; its practical denial of any possible contact between God and man. On the other hand, it was acceptable to the vulgar, as inculcating the worship of a demi-god. For it must be remembered that heathen influences were still very strong in the empire; the civil service, the army, and the courts of law were filled with pagans; education was largely in the hands of pagans; indeed, general society itself was as yet scarcely touched by Christian ideas.

OTTLEY: *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, v. I, 299, 307, 308.

NOTE 10. Holiest among the mighty, and mightiest among the holy; who with his pierced hands has lifted the gates of Empire off their hinges and turned the course of history into other channels.

Jean Paul Richter.

NOTE II.

But thou, but thou, O sovereign Seer of Time,
But thou, O poet's Poet, wisdom's Tongue,
But thou, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ;
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King or Priest—
What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
What least defect, or shadow of defect,
What rumor tattled by an enemy,
Of inference loose, what lack of grace,
Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
Jesus, good Paragon, thou crystal Christ?

SIDNEY LANIER.

CHAPTER VI

NOTE I. It looks very strange to me now, that I once hung a long time over the scandal matter of these poetic episodes; till finally I found grace to make the discovery, that they are exactly what and where they ought to be, and that, instead of doubting I ought even to be believing, just because of them. They are, in fact, properties only of the incarnation; for what have we in it but the very nearly one event of the world? This, of course, any one may doubt if he will, but no sane person, I think, can deny that it is either a transaction so great, or else it is nothing. It may not be a fact, but if it is, which is the exact matter here assumed, it cannot be less than what these incidents and demonstrations signify. Furthermore, I will even dare to aver that the manner of this incarnation story is natural, as it could be in no other possible way, and is cast in a form of the strongest possible self-affirmation. It comes to pass in just the only way conceivable or credible. Thus, if there were no divine election here of the mother, no annunciation to her of her office, nothing but a birth, whence coming or how she could not explain; or if it came in wedlock unhymned, bringing no evidence but the remarkable quality finally to be discovered of the child, or if it were a possession taken of some full-grown man, to be finally empowered and set on by the visibly deific forces bodied in him; who could ever become certified of an incarnation accomplished under

any such conditions? Besides, the very word itself implies a visible insphering in flesh, and how can that be accomplished without a birth into it? and how that, without a divine overshadow to quicken and matriculate that birth? In short, there must be a Mary in the process, or it will not be done. And then just all the wonders of story and music of song that were staggering our faith, are seen to be only the proper all-hail, or fit salutation of the advent made.

HORACE BUSHNELL: *Sermons on Living Subjects*, 12.

NOTE 2. Only in the two later gospels also is the miraculous conception of Jesus thought of. But although there has been found therein, Matt. 1: 22, 23, a fulfilment of the prophecy Isa. 7: 14, yet neither can it have been invented as a proof of this fulfilment, since no pre-Christian interpretation of that passage referred to the birth of Messiah by a virgin, nor is there any discussion on this fulfilment, since the whole stress from the context is laid on this, how one born of a virgin can yet be regarded as the legitimate heir of the royal house of David. The representation of the evangelists hence certainly presupposes this fact to be one already resting on tradition, and it is certainly false to believe this tradition to have arisen as an exaggeration of the idea of the anointing of Messiah by the Spirit of God. But in both evangelists there is brought into prominence only the Messianic character in general, but not any determination of the nature of Jesus' person as the consequence of this birth, which had been brought about by God in a special sense, not to speak then of its being then verified that this supernatural character would prove thereby the fact of this birth by a woman.

If the divinely produced conception of Mary is referred to the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1: 20; Luke 1: 35), then is he only regarded, as in Christ's miracles, as the effective power of God, which effected miracles; but he is by no means represented, as Baur, p. 200, supposes, as the immanent, the innermost central-point of the principle, which forms the personality of Jesus. To speak entirely of Gnosticizing speculations, which are to find their expression even in Matt. 16: 16, Luke 9: 20 (Schenkel, p. 364 f.) is quite perverse.

WEISS: *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, II, 299-300.

NOTE 3. That Paul herewith [Rom. 1: 3] denies a supernatural conception of Jesus (Pfleiderer I., 151) is certainly to say too much; for even for the consciousness of the evangelists, who relate the miracle of the supernatural conception, the

latter did not exclude the extraction of Christ from the fathers. If, now, Paul had simply adopted his statement regarding the descent of Jesus from the seed of David from tradition, which was altogether unacquainted, at least in wide circles, with the events that took place at his birth, and therefore thought of that descent in the common sense, but had also reflected upon its compatibility with a supernatural conception, it is, of course self-evident that such a conception was possible only if Christ was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4), who belonged to the seed of David *i.e.*, according to Rom. 1:3, to the family which was descended, bodily, from David. And even allowing that we had no other indication that Mary was descended from David (which I, for my part, would be disposed to deny), that does not hinder Paul or the evangelists from having in this way reconciled to themselves the traditional descent of Jesus from the family of David with his (presupposed or traditional) supernatural conception. Whether Paul, however, has thought at all upon this question can no more be determined than whether he has drawn that dogmatical consequence. In his view of Christ as the second Adam there is certainly not yet involved the assumption of a new creative act on the occasion of his conception, for it is not permissible to carry out this typical parallel beyond the *tertium comparationis* which is clearly stated by himself.

WEISS: *Biblical Theology*, I, 405.

CHAPTER VII

NOTE 1. Athanasius restored to theology Christ as Redeemer from sin, and set aside the too prominent idea of Christ as teacher of self-redemption through self-knowledge. He united the diverging lines of faith and knowledge in the thought of forgiveness of sin as the one way to life and blessedness. He thus put natural theology nearer to its proper place and made it but a tutor to lead to Christ. He followed Origen in holding that Christ wrought both propitiation and redemption by his sacrifice; but he looked upon salvation as deliverance from death, the result of sin, rather than as deliverance from Satan. He agreed with Origen that Christ offered himself to the love of God; but he added the idea that Christ offered himself also to the righteousness of God which must exact death as the penalty of sin. No man could be a Chris-

tian by following the "New Law;" he must have the life of Christ in him, and follow Christ as his example and Lord. Here Athanasius laid stress upon two lines of thought which are now prominent in modern theology; first, that which connects Christ's work of atonement with all spiritual laws that help make it intelligible, and, second, that which unites it closely with the life that flows from it. But in the center is the Christ incarnate, who alone can save. Arianism was the logical outcome of the view that Christ is a teacher, and it called naturally only for knowledge and virtue as taught by Christ. But forgiveness of sin, salvation as grasped by Athanasius, meant both a divine Redeemer and a vital union with him, that included all that Origen meant by faith and knowledge. A redeemed man does not walk to liberty in his own wisdom and virtue, but through the mercy and help of another.

SCOTT: *Ante-Nicene Theology*, 241, sq.

NOTE 2. That the work of Christ was his achievement, that it culminates in his sacrificial death, that it signifies the vanquishing and effacing of the guilt of sin, that salvation consequently consists in the forgiveness, the justification, and the adoption of man, are thoughts which are wholly absent in no Church father. In some they stand out boldly.

HARNACK: *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 50.

NOTE 3. The divine sacrifice in the earlier epistles of Paul is, first, a supreme display of divine righteousness and love; righteousness vindicating the law that sin deserves and necessarily involves penalty; love finding a way by free self-sacrifice to reconcile holiness with mercy. Again, it is a vicarious self-oblation; a representative offering, a submission to the law of divine justice made on behalf of men by One who suffered in their stead; One who submitted, though sinless, to be the sacrifice for sin. Again, it is a redemption, the blood of Christ being a propitiatory sacrifice, by which mankind was delivered from the curse and tyranny of sin. The phrase "propitiation" (Rom. 3: 25) implies, according to Old Testament usage, the idea of deliverance, but at a mighty cost. The self-surrender of Christ to death is described as a redemption price (1 Cor. 6: 20) with which mankind has been purchased, but the thought is combined with that of propitiation. Lastly, the work of Christ is regarded ultimately as a reconciliation, or atonement, by which God again admits man, on his submission to the divine will, into favor and

friendship. In this connection it is the obedience of Christ, exemplified both in his life and in his submission to death, that is the means of reconciliation, while the ground of it is to be found in the divine mercy. The result of this act of grace is the acceptance, or justification, of man and the imparting to him of the righteousness of Christ. The new life of Christians, however, is the self-communication of the risen Redeemer's life and grace. If they are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, they are saved by his life. Thus the work of Christ as man's atoning sacrifice is merged in his function as the mediator of salvation.

OTTLEY: *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, I, 101.

NOTE 4. So also Jesus, in declaring his own death to be the sacrifice of the new covenant, regarded that death as a valuable and well-pleasing offering or service to God, whereby the new and perfect relation of fellowship and blessing between God and men, denoted in the conception of the kingdom of God, would be brought to an established condition. He thereby regarded his death as virtual obedience to God, in which the conduct required by God of the members of his kingdom was represented as fulfilled, and accordingly he also viewed his death as a pledge that God would on his side keep faithfully to this gracious relation, and would perform his promises of blessing to the members of the kingdom,—and further, in the words at the last supper, he declared his death to be such a sacrifice as would form a sure seal, of blissful import for his disciples, on the new covenant of the kingdom of God,—not in the idea that God needed this sacrifice in order that his saving grace might have existence, but yet in the assurance that his obedience satisfied by his death, because of the actual value it has in God's eyes, would also become an *actually operative motive* for God to ratify his gracious will in the case of his disciples.

WENDT: *The Teaching of Jesus*, II, 237, 245.

NOTE 5. The system, the dispensation, established by Christ corresponds in the truest sense to a New Covenant, and rests upon a covenant. A covenant indeed requires for absolute validity the ratification by death, as is conspicuously illustrated by the fundamental covenant sacrifice in Gen. xv and by the covenant with Israel.

And this condition was satisfied by Christ. He was himself the covenant-victim. In this aspect he attested the inviolable force of the covenant which he established. Not in

a figure only, but in reality, he showed how the covenant was valid and must be valid. He made the new relation of man to God possible and sure. His death was an atonement for sin, and it was a perfect ratification of the covenant which he made "in his blood," in his life offered and communicated. In him humanity fulfilled its part. For here we are considering not a covenant between man and man, but between man and God. And that man may enter into such a relation he must yield up life, that he may receive it again. This Christ has done once for all for men, and in him, in virtue of his life, all men can draw nigh to God.

WESTCOTT: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Note on Heb. 9: 16.

NOTE 6. The gift is communicated to mankind in Christ, the Author of our redemption by means of his blood. According to the divine purpose for the universe, all things are to be summed up (Eph. 1: 10) in Christ. He was foreordained to be the principal of their unity, the source of their life, the mainspring of their renewal, the controller of their movement. His work is one of reconciliation or restitution of all things to a state which they were predestined to attain; a restoration of harmony between God and the universe.

OTTLEY: *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, I, III.

NOTE 7. When we say the death of Christ was instead of our punishment, and that it made expiation for our sins, we are not stating theories but revealed facts. We suppose that in this fact is contained an answer to the question, "How can a sinner be pardoned?" and that the answer is, "By faith in Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, by a belief in his sufferings and death instead of ours. . . . The very nature and essence of the sufferings and death of Christ is that they are an expiation for sin. This is the very idea of sacrifice. It is its exhaustive definition; it is the thing itself, and not a deduction or inference from it. It is the fact, and not a theory about it. If one does not believe in the expiation, he does not believe in the sacrifice. We have the shell and not the kernel, we have death and suffering, and not life and peace. . . . To require us to believe in the necessity of the death of an incarnate God, for our redemption, without making that death to be a propitiation for our sins, is to require us to believe in the most startling of facts, and to close our eyes to any reason or availability for it,—is not only to demand an historical faith, but a faith for which no sufficient reason can be assigned, in a fact at once monstrous and enigmatical. . . .

The great fact of objective Christianity is incarnation in order to atonement; the great fact of subjective Christianity is union with Christ, whereby we receive the atonement.

Prof. HENRY B. SMITH: *Christian Theology*, *passim*.

NOTE 8. Thus the two—the Blood and the Death—correspond generally with the two sides of Christ's work, the fulfilment of the destiny of man as created, and the fulfilment of this destiny though man has fallen. The first would have been necessary, even though sin had not interrupted the due course of man's progress and relation to God. It becomes necessary, therefore, in order to gain a complete view of the sacrifice of Christ, to combine with the crowning act upon the cross his fulfilment of the will of God from first to last (10: 5 ff.), the sacrifice of life with the sacrifice of death. And when we look back over the facts of Christ's sacrifice brought forward in the Epistle, we notice two series of blessings gained for men by him, the one series answering to the restoration of man's right relation to God which has been violated by sin, and the other answering to the fulfilment of the purpose of creation, the attainment by man of the divine likeness: on the one side we recognize a reopened entrance into the Holiest, closed against fallen man, and fresh access to God, on the other side sovereignty over "the house" and free intercourse with God.

WESTCOTT: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Note on Heb. 9: 14.

NOTE 9. I believe in a real atonement, a real reconciliation of man to God in the body of Christ. I believe that this atonement was vicariously made, that we never could have attained to it unless Christ had prepared for us that union with God which I have called the new religious synthesis. I believe, further, that in preparing this atonement Christ offered satisfaction to God by presenting to him a humanity in which he could be well pleased; and that, in fine, he became a propitiation by giving the answer of a perfectly approving and submissive will to that Divine indignation which must ever be excited by the spectacle of defiant wickedness.

Bishop MOORHOUSE: *Dangers of the Apostolic Age*, 108.

NOTE 10. The Atonement works in the universe as the manifest and embodied judgment of God against sin, but of this judgment as chastening and regenerative rather than juridical and penal. It is designed to create in man all the effects of

corrective and remedial sufferings, to do the work of restorative and reformatory penalties, only it accomplishes this in a more efficient mode than could the sufferings themselves. It burns into the soul of the sinner the sense of the evil and the shame of sin, forces him to look at it with God's eyes, to judge it with his conscience, to hate it with his hate—in a word, to change his own attitude to it for God's. And when this is the case the sinner is saved, but so saved that his salvation is the supreme victory of righteousness and sovereignty as well as of love and grace. The Atonement may therefore be described as the method by which God has so judged sin in the very home of the sinful as to achieve the salvation of the sinner.

FAIRBAIRN: *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, 482, 483.

NOTE II. The atonement for our sins which was made in his death could not effect the result of our actual appropriation of salvation unless it had been followed by the resurrection from the dead. . . . The representation that salvation is appropriated through an ethical dying and rising to new life with Christ is passed upon the causal connection between those events and the believer's spiritual renewal. . . . Salvation is not wrought merely by the acceptance of the cancellation of man's debt which another has discharged, but by the actual entrance of the soul into life-fellowship with Christ. . . . If Christ's satisfaction were merely rendered to law, so that the extreme penalty might be withdrawn, as the more extreme governmental views would represent, then the appropriation of the benefits of that satisfaction would naturally bear a legal character also, and salvation would be defined as an acceptance of the fact that Christ had discharged our obligation for us. The apostle, however, defines salvation in terms of life; it is a matter of actual spiritual relations. . . . If Christ was the adequate revelation of God in his essential perfections, his work must have been in some way a satisfaction to God's ethical nature—a perfect expression at once of "the goodness and severity of God." In that case the appropriation of the work is no mere formal acceptance or assent, but is an entrance into fellowship with those perfections of God which Jesus revealed, honored and satisfied. . . . If, however, the formal modes of thought are adhered to as containing the essence of their meaning *in their very form* and not in the moral relations and truths which they, by analogy, represent, a construction of the doctrine of the atonement results which can make small use of the terminology that pictures sal-

vation as a moral process, if indeed it admits of reconciliation with such terminology at all.

Prof. GEO. B. STEVENS: *The Pauline Theology*, 255, 257.

NOTE 12. The idea of law in the New Testament has very little in common with the idea of law in our juridical theologies. The Roman *lex* was not the synonym of the Greek νόμος, especially when used to translate the Hebrew *torah*. Into *lex* whole systems of jurisprudence were packed; it raised the image of the Cæsar, who was its source, the *judex* who was its interpreter, the *procurator* who was its guardian, the *lictors* with their *fascæ*, and all the *apparitores* who waited to be the agents and instruments of justice, when engaged in its noble but often hard and painful work of vindicating authority. But to a Jew who, though he used Greek, thought in Hebrew, νόμος had other and larger associations. It was primarily instruction, a method of discipline through the truth and ordinances given of God, received and revealed by prophets and priests, written in the sacred books, explained, transmitted and enlarged in the schools, read in the synagogue, observed in the Temple, incorporated in the religion. When a Roman jurist, even though he had become a Christian Father, thought of law, it was as known in the schools where he had studied and in the courts where he had practised; all its associations were judicial, all its processes forensic, all its judgments aimed at the suppression of crime and the satisfaction of justice by penalties. But when a Jewish scholar who had become a Christian Apostle thought of law, it was as the moral and ceremonial, the social and sacerdotal system in which he had been instructed as a religion and as the peculiar revelation granted to his people. There were points indeed where the ideas touched, but these were incidental, while the points where they differed were essential. Hence if a man reads the Pauline νόμος as if it were Roman and magisterial *lex*, he will radically misread it, especially in all that concerns its relation to the death of Christ. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law;" certainly, but this was the law which the Jew loved, and which was thus forever abolished, not the universal law of God. He became "a curse for us"; certainly, but under the same law, for by it he was "hanged upon a tree." But the law that thus judged him condemned itself; by cursing him it became accursed. His death was not the vindication but the condemnation of the law. And this is the characteristic attitude of the New Testament writers. The law which Christ at once fulfilled and abolished was not the law of

the judge and jurist, but the law of the rabbi and the priest, the law of ceremonial and service, of works and worship, of prophecy and type. The language which describes his relation to it and its to him cannot be used to describe his relation to the absolute law or righteousness of God. This relation we must interpret through our idea of God, not through our very mixed notions of law and justice.

FAIRBAIRN: *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, 480, 481.

CHAPTER VIII

NOTE 1. The first appearance of the clause, "He descended into Hades," is in the latter half of the 4th century, in the creed of the church of Aquileia. Pearson (Creed, Art. V.), by citations, shows that the creeds, both ecclesiastical and individual, prior to this time, do not contain it. Burnet (Thirty-nine Articles, Art. III) asserts the same. Rufinus, the presbyter of Aquileia, says that the intention of the Aquileian alteration of the creed was, *not to add a new doctrine, but to explain an old one*; and therefore the Aquileian creed omitted the clause, "was crucified, dead and buried," and substituted for it the new clause, "*descendit in inferna*." Rufinus also adds that "although the preceding Roman and Oriental editions of the creed had not the words, 'He descended into Hades,' yet they had the sense of them in the words, 'He was crucified, dead, and buried.'" (Pearson, Article V.) The early history of the clause, therefore, clearly shows that the "Hades" to which Christ was said to have descended was simply the "grave" in which he was buried.

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD: *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, 69, 70.

NOTE 2. Whatever be the interpretation of 1 Peter 3: 18-20, such a remarkable doctrine as the descent to Hades should have more foundation than a single disputed text. The doctrine itself is so obscure that it has had five different forms of statement.

1. Christ virtually descended into Hades because his death was efficacious upon the souls there.
2. Christ actually descended into Hades.
3. Christ's descent into Hades was his suffering the torments of hell.
4. Christ's descent into Hades

was his burial in the grave. 5. Christ's descending into Hades was his remaining in the state of the dead for a season. The Westminster Larger Catechism (50) combines the last two: "Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, 'He descended into hell.'"

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD: *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, 77, note.

NOTE 3. The article is important as proving the verity and completeness of Christ's manhood; the descent into Hades shows that he had a human soul as well as a human body. It was accordingly customary among the Fathers who opposed the error of Apollinaris to lay special stress on the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell.

OTTLEY: *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, II, 323.

NOTE 4. The Fathers of this period (80 A.D. to 254 A.D.), with the exception of Origen, limited the direct efficacy of Christ's death to this world. But several writers of the second and third centuries thought that it was also retrospective in its effects, and inferred from some allusions in Scripture that Christ descended into the abode of the dead (underworld, Hades), to announce to the souls of the patriarchs, etc., there abiding, the accomplishment of the work of redemption, and to conduct them with him into the kingdom of his glory.

HAGENBACH: *History of Doctrines*, I, 187.

NOTE 5. The ancient Fathers differed much respecting the condition of the dead, and the nature of the place into which souls, before our Saviour's death, were gathered; some looking on that name which we now translate hell, Hades, or infernus, as the common receptacle of the souls of all men, both the just and unjust, while others thought that Hades, or infernus, was never taken in the Scriptures for any place of happiness; and therefore they did not conceive the souls of the patriarchs or the prophets did pass into any such infernal place.

Bishop PEARSON: *The Creed*, Art. V.

NOTE 6. Many of the Fathers thought that Christ's soul went locally into hell, and preached to some of the spirits there in prison; that there he triumphed over Satan and

spoiled him, and carried some souls with him into glory. But the account that the Scripture gives us of the exaltation of Christ begins always at his *resurrection*. Nor can it be imagined that so memorable a transaction as this would have been passed over by the first three Evangelists, and least of all by St. John, who, coming after the rest, and designing to supply what was wanting in them, and intending particularly to magnify the glory of Christ, could not have passed over so wonderful an instance of it.

Bishop BURNET: *Thirty-Nine Articles*, Art. III.

NOTE 7. Through sixty generations men of every tongue and of every land and of every church have discovered for themselves that He is living still. Penitents have received absolution from his lips. At his word an evil passion has sometimes withered to its roots; at the touch of his hand evil habits have sometimes fallen away from men as the fetters fell away from Peter at the touch of the angel. More commonly he has given to those who have trusted him strength to struggle with their baser life and to subdue it—strength to achieve by vigilance and self-discipline a righteousness which they knew was impossible to them apart from him. He has given them peace in times of great trouble, courage in the presence of great dangers; and they knew that the peace and courage came from him. In prisons and solitary places they were not alone, for he was with them. In Christ—not in the remembrance of Christ, but in the living, personal Christ—a great multitude that no man can number have found God. Those who deny his supernatural power have only begun their task when they have stated the case against the miracles which are recorded in the narratives of his earthly life. They have to descend through the Christian centuries and to destroy the trustworthiness of the long succession of penitents and saints who have testified, on their own knowledge, that he was living still, and that his compassions failed not, and that his power was unspent. For the life of every Christian man adds to the great story of Christ new miracles of mercy and of power. The canon is not closed. Every age contributes materials for new gospels. Four brief narratives contain the record of Christ's earthly ministry, and they are incomplete, for "many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples," and many other discourses were spoken by him of which the evangelists have said nothing; but if the history were to be told of the greater miracles of grace which he has wrought since he ascended to the throne of God, "I suppose

that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

R. W. DALE: *Fellowship with Christ*, 41-43.

CHAPTER IX

NOTE 1. Now it is the doctrine of the New Testament that this work of renewal is accomplished by the ascended Christ, acting through the medium of his glorified humanity. The human nature of Christ is raised by the Spirit of God into the resurrection might. Spiritualized, quickened with new capacities of life, but not dehumanized, the God-accepted, God-united humanity is lifted to the divine glory, to be thence, as the second Adam, through the ministry of the Spirit, the source of regenerating, re-creating life to his body the Church. "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit," is the pregnant statement of St. Paul; in its glorified state Christ's manhood becomes the medium whereby the fulness of the divine life is communicated to man; by the resurrection and ascension it acquires an inexhaustible power of self-communication to man. And so, as Leo tersely expresses it, Christ "*caepit esse divinitate praesentior qui factus est humanitate longinquior.*"

OTTLEY: *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, II, 330.

NOTE 2. While St. Paul dwells on the resurrection in each group of his epistles, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to it once only (13: 20; comp. 5: 7), fixing his attention on the ascension (4: 14; 6: 20; 7: 26; 9: 11 f., 24), and the session on the right hand of God (1: 3; 8: 1; 10: 12; 12: 2). This difference follows from the unique teaching of the Epistle on the work of Christ as King-priest.

From what has been said it will be seen that there is a very close connection between the Christology of the writer to the Hebrews and the Christology of St. Paul. Both apostles fix the minds of their readers upon what Christ is and what he did and does, and not upon what he taught; with both his prophetic work falls into the background. Both again rise to the thought of the glorified Christ through the work of Christ on earth. But in this respect the writer to the Hebrews forms a link between St. Paul and St. John. He dwells upon the

eternal nature and unchangeable work of the Son before he treats of his historic work; while for St. John even the sufferings of Christ are a form of his glory. . . . It follows also from the prominence which the writer gives to the priestly work of Christ that he represents the Lord as more active in his passion than St. Paul does. Even on the cross he shows Christ as working rather than as suffering. Christ in St. Paul is regarded predominantly as the Victim, in the Epistle to the Hebrews as the Priest even more than the Victim. In this point again the Epistle comes near to the gospel of St. John, in which Christ on the cross is seen in sovereign majesty.

WESTCOTT: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 427, 428.

CHAPTER X

NOTE 1. Accordingly, inasmuch as the whole race are sinners, and as death, the separation of soul and body, is the fruit of sin; so this one additional notion seems throughout the Bible to cling to *Hades*, the invisible world or spirit-land,—that it is a place of terror to the natural man, and even to the regenerate man, except as that terror is overcome by Christ. It is sometimes personified as one of the great enemies of the race, and of Christ's ransomed and but partly sanctified followers. Here, then, we find the full but simple Scripture idea of *Sheol* and *Hades*; it is the state of the dead or the *invisible world* in general, but viewed as a *foe or object of terror* to man, even to the regenerate man partly sanctified. Though not in itself designating absolutely anything more than the state after death, and sometimes even looking no farther than the grave, its coloring is that of aversion, and not of desire. It is the designation of a region of dread. Accordingly, it is so used uniformly, we think, in the Old Testament, and still more distinctly in the New.

BARTLETT: *Life and Death Eternal*, 365.

NOTE 2. The New Testament has very little to say about Hades, and nowhere unequivocally teaches that all men descend into it. It *may* be inferred from Rev. 20 : 13, where death and Hades are described as giving up the dead that are in them—that all the dead are in Hades; but the passage

does not say this. Luke 16: 23, the most important passage bearing on our question, teaches that *bad* men go to Hades; but that the *good* go there cannot be inferred from it, especially as Lazarus is not spoken of as being in Hades, while the rich man *is* so spoken of. This contrast goes far to favor the doctrine that, according to Christ, the good do *not* go to Hades. His promise to the thief, moreover, refers to *Paradise*, not to Hades. And in general, wherever in the New Testament Hades is mentioned, it is as being an unattractive place, associated with the enemies, not the friends, of the kingdom of Christ; and, when it is last mentioned, it is as being cast into the lake of fire. . . .

The general purport of the few intimations given to us is to the effect that the believer enters at once into a state of happiness and of conscious fellowship with Christ (Luke 16: 22; 23: 43; Phil. 1: 23), and that the wicked enter into a state of unhappiness (Luke 16: 23).

MEAD: *The Soul Here and Hereafter*, 179, 180.

NOTE 3. So far as I can see, finality is involved in Christ's whole way of viewing the consummation of the kingdom. The "end," whensoever it may come, means for him the time when the process of historical development is complete, when characters have become fixed, and men are what they will be. Whether the end for the individual be the hour of death, or whether development of character may go on beyond that crisis, is a question for the determination of which few materials are to be found in the Gospels. The parable of Dives and Lazarus, when it speaks of the great gulf fixed that cannot be passed from either side, seems rather discouraging to those who cherish "the larger hope."

BRUCE: *The Kingdom of God*, 318.

NOTE 4. Reason did, as it well might, conclude that it should finally be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; but it could not be determined upon any principles of reason whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being before that distributive justice should finally and effectually take place. Revelation teaches us that the next state of things after the present is appointed for the execution of this justice; that it shall no longer be delayed, but the mystery of God, the great mystery of his *suffering vice and confusion to prevail*, shall then be finished; and he will take to him his great

power, and will reign, by rendering to every one according to his works.

BUTLER: *Analogy*, Part I, Chap. 2.

NOTE 5. This judgment of sin is a necessity. For sin is not a fact which an act of oblivion can annihilate; facts are not capable of annihilation, especially when they are evil deeds that have by recognition and confession been committed to the keeping of two memories and two consciences, one accusing, the other accused. And so forgiveness cannot make a sinner feel or be as if he had never sinned; he cannot so stand in his own eye, or believe that he shall ever so stand in the eye of God. And strangely, yet justly enough, it is less easy to forget an unjudged than a judged sin. We are forced ever to remember what we have never confessed or been called to account for. We live in fear lest the slumbering justice we have hitherto eluded should awake and exact tenfold penalties for the silence added to our sin. And this is only one side of the necessity for judgment. That could not be a grave evil which the Author of all good was willing to pass lightly over. What it cost God no pain to forgive it would cost man no pain to repeat. Hence, if man's relation to sin is to be changed, if the guilty is to be forgiven, it must be on terms that leave him in no doubt as to the nature and desert of his sin. And so if God saves man, it is certain that his method will be so to judge sin as to condemn and overcome it more completely than would have been possible by any judicial process or any system of cumulative penalties.

FAIRBAIRN: *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, 481, 482.

NOTE 6. I would not speak too positively upon this subject. God knows that I would welcome any larger hope for those who have fallen short of God's purpose concerning them, not only for the heathen and others who have never heard of Christ through the preached gospel, but also for those who have heard of him and have rejected him. I should rejoice to have all men saved. But the question for me is not what I should like, but what God likes. I know very little. God knows all about it. The question with me, therefore, is, How much hope God's Word justifies me in cherishing and in preaching to my fellow men. Better the silence of faith, than a too eager effort to justify God's ways to men. I am sure that God is love and righteousness, and sure that he condemns no man who has not had ample opportunity to accept his grace. I *think*, judging from all the intimations I can find in

the Bible, that God gives every soul possessed of mature moral capacity such an opportunity in the present life. It seems to me reasonable to believe that any souls which have no such opportunity for any reason—as in the case of those dying in infancy, or of older persons who have not attained their full moral stature—are saved without a probation. I see no need of assuming an extension of probation into the intermediate state, and no Scriptural warrant for it.

STEARNS: *Present Day Theology*, 497.

NOTE 7. But it is not at all a matter of such *a priori* certainty that the apostles viewed the parousia of the Lord as near at hand. They simply viewed it as *possibly* at hand, and that rightly. A prediction of its *actual* nearness would place them in the same class with all chiliastic fanatics. The expectation of its possible nearness stamps them as meek disciples of that Lord who had decided nothing as to the time, and who, therefore, by this very omission left the door open for belief equally in its nearness or in its remoteness, and forbade to no time the Christian longing for and hope of the speedy occurrence of his return. Matt. 24: 36; Acts 1: 7.

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The Lord's return may rightly be viewed as *possibly* near at any time, since the precedent condition, the entrance of the *pleroma* of the Gentile world, may be fulfilled at any time. The fact that we, on our part, further regard as probable a more comprehensive development of the Church upon earth before the approach of the end, need not prevent our holding fast by the thought of the Lord being near; for in prophetic perspective the separate revealed elements of this nearness converge together. In the time of the Old Covenant the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God was still distant, because there must first intervene his incarnation, his passion and death, or his manifestation in a state of humiliation as the revealed element in God's kingdom then near at hand. In the time of the New Covenant the revelation of the glory of Christ is near at hand, because this is the element standing next in order of occurrence after the resurrection and ascension, an element which no doubt again is realized and revealed in successive degrees. A first revelation of this element was the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem, and along with this the complete absorption into the New Testament Christocracy of the Old Testament theocracy. A second main point in the realization of Christ's coming will be the entrance of the Gen-

tile *pleroma*, the conversion of Israel, and the consequent efflorescence and dominion of the Lord's Church over the nations of the earth. The third and last main element in the realization of the parousia consists in the visible return of Christ himself, and in the end to which that return is the introduction. All these are elements of his parousia, which are now prophetically seen in unity, now presented by the Spirit to the prophets of the New Testament, and by them to the churches of Jesus Christ, as distinct and separate elements. That the apostles, in their inquiries respecting the nearness or the remoteness of the Lord's coming, already indicate a similar mode of reconciliation between its nearness predicted and longed for on one side, and its distance, intimated by the advancing experience of the Church, as well as by the separate features of the eschatological pictures drawn for them by the Spirit, on the other, is shown by 2 Pet. 3 : 1-10.

PHILIPPI: *Commentary on Romans*, II, 222, 223.

NOTE 8. Students of the Gospels not specially biased in favor of orthodoxy, such as Holtzmann, have recognized three distinct comings: an *apocalyptic* coming at the end of the world, a *historical* coming at any great crisis, as in the destruction of the Jewish state, and a *dynamical* coming in the heart of believers. The parousia assumes this third aspect chiefly in the fourth Gospel, but traces of it are not wanting in the Synoptics, as in the saying, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . the kingdom of God is within you;" and in the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The three senses are all intelligible and important, and it is *a priori* perfectly credible that they were all present in the mind of Jesus.

BRUCE: *The Kingdom of God*, 287.

CHAPTER XI

NOTE 1. Knapp shows that the Latin *advocatus*, like the Greek *parakletos*, answered more nearly to our general term, *counsel*, having to advise, to direct, to support, rather than to plead; and it is only in this sense that the name is applied to the Holy Spirit, who was not to plead for the disciples, but to

plead in them, to direct them what they were to say, to prompt, to encourage, to support them and to lead them to the Truth. Hence the English word *advocate* would not represent the office of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete. It would have been well indeed if a word coextensive in significance could have been found, so that the unity of the office which our two blessed Paracletes have vouchsafed to assume,—and which is implied where our Lord says that the Father will send them *another Paraclete*, thereby designating himself as the first,—should have been as manifest in our version as in the original.

Still, the sense of *Comforter*, as it was so closely connected with the word according to its Hellenistic usage, is also very appropriate, both to the general work of the Spirit, and to the special reason for which our Lord here promises his help. Only we should bear in mind that the Spirit is the *Comforter* in the primary as well as the secondary sense of that word, and that he did not come merely to console the disciples for their loss, but mainly to strengthen their hearts and minds, by enabling them to understand the whole truth, and to feel the whole power of the gospel.

HARE: *The Mission of the Comforter*, 349, 355.

NOTE 2. The name Paraclete is here applied to Christ as well as to the Spirit, and properly; for it is the common office of each to console and encourage us and to preserve us by their defence. Christ was their patron so long as he lived in the world; he then committed them to the guidance and protection of the Spirit. If any one asks whether we are not to-day under the guardianship of Christ, the answer is easy; Christ is a perpetual Guardian, but not visibly. As long as he walked on earth he appeared openly as their Guardian; now he preserves us by his Spirit. He calls the Spirit *another Comforter* in view of the distinction which we observe in the blessings proceeding from each. It was the appropriate work of Christ, by expiating the sins of the world, to appease the anger of God, to redeem men from death, to obtain righteousness and life. It is the office of the Spirit to make us partakers of Christ himself, as well as of all his blessings.

JOHN CALVIN, in HARE'S *Mission of the Comforter*, 353.

NOTE 3. If you are thankful that Christ is "the way" to the Father, you ought to be equally thankful that the Holy Spirit is the guide *to* and *in* that way. Did you ever pause to consider how much love the Spirit displays in thus leading

sinner to God by Christ? It is worthy of your special notice and gratitude. It will not divert nor divide your attention from the love of God in giving his Son, nor from the love of Christ in giving himself for us. It will increase your love to God and to the Lamb, to trace the love of the Spirit as that shines in the conversion of sinners.

Now, there is no conversion *from* sin until there be conviction *of* sin. And there is no conviction of sin, which tends to Christ or to holiness, but that which the Holy Spirit implants in the soul.

* * * * *

If you understand these hints as I intend them, they will suggest to you a very satisfactory reason why conviction is so calm and gentle in the case of many converts. Do you not see at a glance that the Spirit's point (which is to glorify Christ) is gained, when unbelief gives way? There is, then, no occasion to "set on fire the whole course of nature." Its pride and self-righteousness are demolished when Christ becomes precious to the soul.

Were this duly considered, you would not be afraid lest your convictions, if they have been gradual and gentle, be not the work of the Holy Spirit. He does not work for the sake of working, but in order to bring the soul to the Saviour as its only refuge, and as its supreme example. And, therefore, if you have given your heart to Christ, you have as little occasion to doubt your own conversion as to question Lydia's, whose heart the Lord opened without tempest or terror.

* * * * *

Do speak well of the Holy Spirit to those of your friends who have not yet asked for him. Some of them may be afraid of him. So little is said of his love by many who say much of his power, and the need of it, that not a few are discouraged. Do speak a word in season to those who are thus weary and heavy laden. It will increase your own love to the Spirit, and the Spirit's love to you, to commend him as love to others.

ROBERT PHILIP: *The Love of the Spirit*, 22, 31, 33.

NOTE 4. The principle and fountain of all the Spirit's actings for our consolation, is his own great love and infinite condescension. He willingly proceedeth or comes forth from the Father to be our Comforter. He knew what we were and what we could do, and what would be our dealings with him. He knew we would grieve him, provoke him, quench his motions, defile his dwelling-place. And yet he would come to be

our Comforter. Want of a due consideration of this great love of the Holy Ghost weakens all the principles of our obedience. Did this dwell and abide in our hearts, what a dear valuation must we needs put upon all his operations and actings toward us! And what are we towards whom he carrieth on this work? Froward, perverse, unthankful; grieving, vexing, provoking him; yet in his love and tenderness doth he continue to do us good.

JOHN OWEN: *Communion with God*, 287.

NOTE 5. If men believed there was a divine Person sent down from heaven, and that he was really present with us, to be looked to as directing the assembly, working by whom he would, do you not think that this would be the great prominent fact? I do not mean his merely operating; for the Holy Ghost may work in a Wesleyan Chapel, or by an Anglican clergyman. I entirely admit that, without the operation of the Holy Ghost, none could be converted, or get any truth from the Word of God. Thus the operation of the Spirit is like his own sovereign grace; or, as the Lord compared it, to the wind, blowing where it lists. This is altogether another thing from the recognition of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and his acting freely and sovereignly by such of the members as he is pleased to employ in the Christian assembly.

Do Christians believe that there is such a presence of the Spirit to be counted on? Surely the Word of God is plain; and this is what the saints of God are called to own, and find their blessing in.

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But holding this, I do not admit it to be of God that every one who is received should be required to possess previous understanding or exercised faith in his presence. There are many individual members of Christ who are but feeble in it, and do not enter into its preciousness in any appreciable degree. But so long as the meeting, as a whole, is guided by the Spirit; so long as there is a recognition of his presence, without any known, fixed, or sanctioned hindrance to him; so long as there are no human devices or rules of men, or other arrangements which interfere with the action of the Holy Ghost according to the Word, there, I am persuaded, all children of God are bound to be, and may be, thoroughly happy. Possibly, no doubt, mistakes may be made—we are all liable to error; but our comfort here is to know that we have One present who is alone equal to the correction of all errors, and who, in his own grace, has come down from heaven for the ex-

press purpose of seeing to the saints. Therefore we need never despair, no matter what the difficulties; we should never give up our soul's confidence that the Holy Ghost, who is present with and in us, will see to every hindrance and danger. Let our faith only be towards him; let us only call on the name of the Lord; let us only be sure that he is here for the purpose—I will not say of honoring our faith, but, what is surer and better, for glorifying Christ. This can never fail. At the same time, if there be faith in his presence, as that which after all is the great thought of the meeting as a whole, though not necessarily of every member of it, divine power will be there. But unless the meeting be so far governed by this great truth, it is evident there may be all kinds of human rules brought in which contradict the action of the Holy Ghost there.

W. KELLY: *The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 106, 108.

CHAPTER XII

NOTE I. The nature of the Church and its relation to the kingdom of God are explained in the remarkable words addressed by Jesus to Peter after his bold profession of faith in the Messiahship of his Master. In these words, which are highly animated and dramatic, Peter appears as a most important man. He is the rock on which the Church is to be built; into his hands are committed the keys of the kingdom; his acts in binding and loosing, forbidding and permitting, are valid in heaven. All this belongs to the form rather than to the essence of the thought. It says in a highly emotional and Hebrew manner what can be expressed in abstract, didactic language which eliminates Peter's personality as of no fundamental moment. The imagination that the fact is otherwise is one of the gigantic, tragic mistakes through which the Church has become to a large extent a deplorable failure. . . . It was natural in the circumstances, and characteristic, that Jesus should put the truth concerning the Church to be founded in that concrete, dramatic way. Here he was a fugitive from an unbelieving people, in presence of the first man who had said with clear intelligence and firm conviction,

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How natural that he should speak of this man as the first stone of the new edifice; and that, as if in gratitude to him, he should ascribe to him supreme power and privilege in the society about to be instituted! Nevertheless, all that is said admits of being translated into impersonal language; nor is the sense clear till this has been done. Jesus then gave utterance to three great truths: first, that the Church to be founded was to be *Christian*, or, to put it otherwise, that the person of the Founder was of fundamental importance; second, that as such it should be practically identical with the kingdom of God he had hitherto preached; third, that in this Church the righteousness of the kingdom should find its home.

BRUCE: *The Kingdom of God*. 260, 262.

NOTE 2. By the kingdom of God Jesus meant an ideal (though progressively approximated) social order in which the relation of men to God is that of sons, and (therefore) to each other that of brothers.

* * * * *

Is, then, this new social order, as it develops in scattered groups and attempts to transfigure the world, coextensive with the life of the Church?

Jesus gives us no clear answer, but his position, to judge from the few uncertain expressions of the gospel, seems to imply that the Church is one form of the attempt to realize the principles embodied in the kingdom of God. But there is not a trace of any belief on his part that the two would ever be co-extensive. The new social order was to be religious; historically, it has made much progress through the aid of religious organizations. But it is as much grander than the Church as an ideal is grander than the actual; as much wider as social life is wider than any one institution; as much more catholic as Christianity is more catholic than ecclesiasticism.

SHAILER MATHEWS: *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, 54, 76.

NOTE 3. The kingdom is a separate society in the world in which there is a real union of persons who are conscious that they have what binds them to each other and separates them from the world; but there is nothing formal or institutional about it.

DENNEY: *Studies in Theology*, 175, 176.

NOTE 4. These writers [apostolic] know nothing of the

notion that the Church depends for its being on a special polity; to them such a notion would have seemed like an attempt to change the new law into the old. They would have found all the elements essential to it, all the ideas that most distinguish it—its orders, its authorized channels, its covenanted and uncovenanted mercies, its priestly claims, and its ceremonial sanctities—in the law they had escaped from, whose burdens they and their fathers had not been able to bear. And they would have added: The Church is the people of God; wherever they are he is, and the Church through him in them; and as God's are a free people, he allows them to organize their own polities, the best polities always being those most deeply rooted in love, and so most creative of the spiritual and redeeming graces.

FAIRBAIRN: *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, 530.

NOTE 5. To make the Church was a great work, even for God himself. It needed the Son to go to heaven after redemption was wrought, and the Holy Ghost to come down to the earth, for the purpose. The world he made by his word for the first Adam, though in ultimate purpose, no doubt, for Christ, when he shall be displayed as King in his glory. But even God himself did not (and I think we may say with reverence, could not) make the Church until he had the second Man its glorified Head above, and the Holy Ghost sent down to form the body below. Death and resurrection alone could be an adequate basis; the risen, ascended Lord Jesus alone the suited head. Thus God's Church on earth is not a governmental provision of religion for a nation, nor a society framed to hold and carry out the plans and peculiar views of the best of men. It is the body which the Holy Ghost has formed here below for Christ, whom in its very first principle it confesses as Lord. But the manner of the practical working is in diversities of gifts, though the same spirit.

W. KELLY: *The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 246, 247.

NOTE 6. Thus it is not the simple fact of being members of Christ's body that constitutes the Church. No doubt this is the personal title and all Christians are members of him, and this constitutes their responsibility to abandon everything that falsifies their relationship in conduct, position and objects; but what constitutes God's Church here below is not that the individuals composing it are members of Christ—though that, of course, is essential—but that they assemble

and walk together according to the Word of God, the Holy Ghost being allowed his own place of sovereign action for the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is only a circumstance whether they be two or three, or as many hundreds, thousands or millions. The number of those who gather is a wholly subordinate point.

W. KELLY: *The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 252.

NOTE 7. Neither a communion of believers, nor an invisible Church, as is falsely believed, did the Reformers have in view, but their object was to improve the old Church of priests and sacraments by dissolving her hierarchic monarchical constitution, by abolishing her assumed political powers and by carefully sifting her priests according to the standard of the law of Christ, or of the Bible. On these conditions she was also esteemed by the Reformers as a visible holy Church, through which God realizes his predestinations. They did not recognize that the carrying out of this Donatistic thesis was an impossibility and that this reformed Church must again become hierarchical.

HARNACK: *History of Dogma*, 449.

NOTE 8. We await no kingdom of God which is to descend from heaven upon the earth and destroy this world; but we hope to be assembled with the Church of Jesus Christ in the heavenly Basileia. In this sense can we yearn and say as did the ancient Christians: "Thy kingdom come."

J. WEISS: *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, 76.

NOTE 9. Reunion is possible only through refusion, and refusion is possible only through new religious intuitions and enthusiasms. There must come a change in the nature of our interest. At present the supreme interest of the majority is in their Church. For them, as for the woman of Samaria, the great question is—Gerizim or Jerusalem, which of them is the place where men ought to worship? Union will come when men have learned that the vital question is not, where but, how. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." The "hour" Jesus spake of was the Christian era, which abolished old enmities, antiquated old institutions, upset partition walls, traversed party lines, and established a new society in which old distinctions were ignored, and once alienated men

were formed into a close brotherhood. Can such an hour come again; or can a religion, can even Christianity, have such an hour only once in its history? If, as both faith and philosophy attest, Christianity be the absolute religion, perennial because perfect, not destined to be superseded by anything better, because better is impossible, it must possess the power of rejuvenescence. It must be able to shake itself clear of whatever hampers the free expression of its eternal vitality. It is the worship of the Spirit, and the Spirit must and will rid itself of all bonds. The need of a new hour of emancipation is a prophecy of its coming. One of the things that show the need is the divided state of the Church. Division is an infallible sign that the spirit of Christ immanent in the Church is in bondage. If Christ's spirit were among us in power, our divisions would appear ridiculous and intolerable. Hence we learn what is the hope of deliverance. It lies in the increase of men to whom Christ and Christianity are first, and everything else secondary. Every man to whom is given a fresh intuition of Christ will become an apostle of union, if not in the sense of ecclesiastical reconstruction, which may or may not be a great boon, according to circumstances, at least in the sense of a real spiritual fellowship that will either make existing churches serve its purpose, or create for itself new media of self-manifestation.

BRUCE: *The Kingdom of God*, 337-339.

NOTE 10. Men are brothers through the possession of a life derived from the same parent. So in the new social order of Jesus, those men who have satisfied the deepest possibilities of their nature and are living in union with God—that is, are righteous—are brothers. Here again we meet with an accurate use of terms. The members of the kingdom alone are called brothers by Jesus. Outside of those that clearly refer to physical relationship there is not a saying of Jesus preserved for us that does not restrict this most expressive term to the description of this new social relationship, the possibility and nature of which it was his mission to reveal. In actual society as he saw it, fraternal relations were not prevalent. Men quarrelled, lusted, hated, deceived, fought. Their very philanthropy and religion were tinged with selfishness. But in the new social order he sought to portray and inaugurate none of these things were to be. Men were to be perfect, as their heavenly Father was perfect, and among them reconciliation, purity, love, were to be the outcome of their consciousness of their divine brotherhood. And what is this but say-

ing that the ideal society that awaits the world as a fulfilment of man's social capacities is no mere collocation of dissimilar, repellent individuals, but a union of men similarly righteous, all alike possessed of a consciousness of noble possibilities, seeking the good one of another, with moral impulses springing from their religious life—a unity whose bonds are organic and spiritual.

SHAILER MATHEWS: *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, 68, 69.

CHAPTER XIII

NOTE. 1. It is not a vain and false, but an exalted and religious imagination which leads to the contemplation of a myriad of fellow beings with which God's goodness has peopled eternal space. So also it is neither false nor vain to consider ourselves interested in and connected with our whole race through all time; allied to our ancestors; allied to our posterity; closely connected on all sides with others, ourselves but links in the great chain of being which begins with the origin of our race, runs onward through its successive generations binding together the past, the present and the future, and terminating at last with the consummation of all things earthly at the throne of God.

DANIEL WEBSTER: *Plymouth Rock Oration*, 1820.

NOTE 2. These words *πόλις* and *civitas* were to the Greek and Roman respectively the parents of the terms that expressed their noblest ideas as to the collective and corporate life of their peoples, the qualities which gave them distinction, made them freeborn and privileged men. Outside the *πόλις* men were but slaves or barbarians; within the *civitas* men were civilized, lived ordered, kindly, courtly lives.

And the city we here speak of bears this high, ideal sense, only enlarged, exalted and transfigured by the relation in which it stands to God. It is the society he has created, the community of men who know that they are his sons, regenerated and inspired by his truth, possessed of his Spirit, obedient to his will, working for his ends.

What the Jew meant by the kingdom, the Greek meant by the city of God; but they viewed the truth they so expressed under different aspects and from different standpoints. The

kingdom accentuated the idea of the reign of God realized in the righteousness or the obedience of man; but the city accentuated the idea of the divine law or will realized in his free and ordered and richly beautiful social life. Spirits were needful to the realization of this ideal, but still more the creative and constitutive truths which made the spirits and organized the society. It was too immense to be limited to earth: the sainted dead and the saintly living were alike citizens. It was too imperishable to be bounded by time; the possibilities of obedience were inexhaustible. The realization of the ideal—though not the ideal itself, that was as eternal as God—had its beginning in time, but it would proceed throughout eternity. The more perfect a spirit becomes, the greater its conformity to the divine will. But above the highest degree reached, higher degrees rise in endless progression. The city of God is the society of godlike spirits with all their godlike capabilities and affinities in exercise and development, moving, as it were, out of their imperfection as creatures to the perfection loved and desired of the Creator.

FAIRBAIRN: *The City of God*, 357, 358.

NOTE 3.

They will link the past and present into one continuous life; While I feel their hope, their patience, nerve me for the daily strife.

For it is not all a fancy that our lives and theirs are one; And we know that all we see is but an endless work begun. Part is left in nature's keeping, part has entered into rest; Part remains to grow and ripen, hidden in some living breast.

CLERK MAXWELL: *Life*, 249. *After his father's death.*

NOTE 4. Friendship appears in the highest intensity as religious friendship, as the drawing together of friends in consequence of the definite affinity of their religious individualities. For, in consequence of the central place of moral purity in man, the definite religious sympathy of individuals is their actual sympathy in the totality of their moral nature, and in all their innermost being.

ROTHE: *Christliche Ethik*.

NOTE 5. I would see afresh, I would have you see, how sacred becomes the Church of Christ, when from and through its worship, its sacraments, its holy fellowships, one lovingly

enfolded and nurtured in them goes up to join the choir invisible, leaving a glory upon that which here continues apparent from that which there is sublimely attained. I would have you feel, as I would feel, how sacred is life, while we are walking, day by day, in intimate companionship with those who are the heirs of heaven; and who, not daring themselves, it may be, to believe it, are drawing nearer with every hour to the sweet sublimities of the Father's house. I would press the truth on your hearts, as on mine, that death brings only consummation to highest aims and purest tendencies, in those whom we have lovingly watched; and that, however suddenly and appallingly it comes, it only lifts to realms unseen the bloom and beauty, the unfolding of which was here our joy, the perfection of which shall be to us there our inexpressible and immortal delight.

RICHARD S. STORRS, D.D.: *First the Natural; Afterward the Spiritual*, 22.

CHAPTER XIV

NOTE 1. Harnack acknowledges (*Dogmengeschichte* III, 743) that "the strongest argument" against his view of Ante-Nicene Christianity, namely, that through Greek influence it was largely a pagan secularization of the primitive faith, is that it is the old theology that produces "a deep knowledge of sin, true penitence and a living church activity."

NOTE 2. This sense of sin, which lies like a black pall over the entire face of humanity, has been all along the point of departure for every preacher, writer and thinker within the Hebrew or the Christian fold; and it is the gradual and palpable decline of it, in the literature of society to-day, that is the darkest among all the signs now overshadowing what is in some respects the bright and hopeful promise of the future.

W. E. GLADSTONE: *The Impregnable Rock*, 105.

CHAPTER XV

NOTE 1. The resurrection which Paul looked for is by no means what was looked for by the Jews, a simple restora-

tion of the present body. What was indeed hinted at in the teaching of Christ he has developed still further. He illustrates the details of this by the similitude of the seed-corn, which must perish in order that there may spring from it a vegetable body; and it is an entirely new one (because seed-corn generally had no body, but was a "naked grain"), and yet one peculiar to the particular seed-corn (1 Cor. 15: 36-38). Thus it is the body of the particular individual which has decayed which is quickened at the resurrection; and yet is it, so far as its properties are concerned, an entirely new one, as there are even elsewhere very different "bodies" according to the differences of materials of which they consist, and according to the differences in glory which belong to them. (vs. 39-41).

WEISS: *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, II, 60.

NOTE 2. It is not, then, necessary to the blessedness of the soul that it be detached from a body of any kind whatever, but that it receive an incorruptible body. And in what incorruptible body will they more suitably rejoice than in that in which they groaned when it was corruptible? For thus they shall not feel that dire craving which Virgil, in imitation of Plato, has ascribed to them when he says that they wish to return again to their bodies. They shall not, I say, feel this desire to return to their bodies, since they shall have those bodies to which a return was desired, and, indeed, shall be in such thorough possession of them, that they shall never lose them even for the briefest moment, nor ever lay them down in death.

AUGUSTINE: *City of God*, II, 532.

NOTE 3. All is comprehended in the fundamental contrast (1 Cor. 15: 44) according to which the body sprung from Adam, made of the dust of the ground, was earthly (ver. 47, 48), and therefore physical (ver. 45, 46); while that springing from the heavenly second man will be heavenly (ver. 48), and therefore, like the body of the risen Christ (ver. 45), spiritual. Therefore likewise are given the incorruption and the fulness of power, but above all that heavenly light-substance which is peculiar to spiritual beings dwelling in heaven. In this glorified body the spirit has just found an organ completely corresponding to it; it is a building coming from God himself, as "a house not made with hands, eternal." In hope it already ideally exists in heaven, to be given at the resurrection. (Comp. Col. 3: 4.)

WEISS: *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, II, 60, 61.

NOTE 4. The idea of "the body of Christ" has a very wide and important bearing upon the apprehension of the truth of the Incarnation. The "body" is the one complete organism through which the life is realized under special conditions. The body, if we may so speak, is the expression of the life in terms of the environment. Thus the one life of the Son of Man is equally manifested under different circumstances by "the body of humiliation" and by "the body of glory."

The conception of "the body" is fundamentally different from that of "flesh and blood," the symbolic (representative) elements, which go to form our present bodies. Of these "the blood" is taken to symbolize the principle of the earthly life. That in us which is represented by "the blood" has no place in the body of the resurrection. (Luke 24: 39, flesh and bones.)

WESTCOTT: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 340.

NOTE 5. For as those bodies of ours, that have a living soul, though not as yet a quickening spirit, are called soul-informed bodies, so also those bodies are called spiritual—yet God forbid that we should therefore suppose them to be spirits and not bodies—which being quickened by the Spirit, have the substance, but not the unwieldiness and corruption of flesh. Man will then be, not earthly but heavenly—not because the body will not be that very body which was made of earth, but because by its heavenly endowment it will be a fit inhabitant of heaven, and this not by losing its nature, but by changing its quality.

AUGUSTINE: *City of God*, II, 547.

NOTE 6. The resurrection body will be a spiritual body, that is, not composed of some tenuous spiritual substance, as some would interpret (for it is to be a body, not a spirit, material, not immaterial), but a body adapted to a state in which the spirit, the higher, religious principle in man, will have the predominance, a life of perfect communion with God and Christ and holy beings, in which eating and drinking will be subordinate, in which there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but likeness to the angels (Matt. 22: 30).

STEARNS: *Present Day Theology*, 523.

NOTE 7. Tennyson writes to Alfred Locker, "After all, what is matter? I think it is merely the shadow of something greater than itself, and which we poor short-sighted creatures

cannot see." And again, "Yes, it is true there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the spiritual to be the only real and true. Depend upon it, the spiritual is the only real, it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of existence, I could believe you; but you never could convince me that the I is not an eternal reality, and that the spiritual is not the true and real part of me."

TENNYSON: *Life* II, 69, 90.

NOTE 8. A gift of personality which is at the same time the dissipation of the personality in question, a harmonizing which means disappearance, recall too forcibly the Roman method of pacification—they make a desert, and they call it peace.

Professor SETH: *Theism*, 54.

NOTE 9.

The love of home or race,
Which doth transfigure us and seems to bring
On every heaven-lit face
Some shadow of the glory of our King,
Fades not on earth, nor with our years doth end;
Nay, even earth's poor physical powers transcend
The narrow bounds of space and time,
The swift thought by some mystic sympathy
Speeding through desert sand, and storm-tost sea.
And shall we hold the range of mind
Is to our little lives confined;
That the pure heart in some blest sphere above,
Loves not, which here was set on fire of love;
The clear eye scans not still, which here could scan
The confines of the universal plan;
The seer nor speaks nor thinks his thoughts sublime,
And all of Homer is a speck of time?

Nay, friend, let us forget
Our haunting doubt and fears a little while.
Again our springs shall smile;
We shall not perish yet.
If God so guide our fate,
The nobler portions of ourselves shall last
Till all the lower rounds of life be past,
And we, regenerate.

We, too, again shall rise,
 The same and not the same,
 As daily rise upon the orient skies
 New dawns with wheels of flame.
 So, if it worthy prove,
 Our being, self-perfected, shall upward move
 To higher essence, and still higher grown,
 Not sweeping idle harps before a throne,
 Nor spending praise where is no need of praise,
 But through unnumbered lives and ages come
 From pure laborious days,
 To an eternal home,
 Where spring is not, nor birth, nor any dawn,
 But life's full noontide never is withdrawn.

SIR LEWIS MORRIS: *Works*, 85.

NOTE 10. "It is surely a frivolous notion," says Isaac Taylor, "that the vast and intricate machinery of the universe, and the profound scheme of God's government, are now to reach a resting-place, where nothing more shall remain to active spirits through an eternity, but recollections of labor, an-thems of praise, and inert repose."

Again he says, "All the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs, all the versatility, the sagacity, the calculation of chances, the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility, as well as the highest virtues, which we are learning every day, may well find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated when we think of heaven as the stage of life which is next to follow the discipline of life."

JOHN WATSON: *The Mind of the Master*, 308, 311.

NOTE 11. Both Christ and the apostles teach that the resurrection is a future simultaneous event, to take place on the last day. They never represent it, as some modern interpreters would fain make them do, as the rising of the soul at death into a spiritual body.

The resurrection is man's deliverance from the power of death, his physical redemption. We have seen that man was made to be a unity of soul and body; both are essential to the complete man. Sin has severed this connection through death. Death is not natural to man, but the consequence and punishment of sin. Even believers, although death is turned into life through the power of Christ's redemption, and they pass when they die into the heavenly blessedness, are under the sway of death in this respect, that they are sepa-

rated from the body. Even if they should have some temporary organism in the intermediate state, it is not the earthly body. But in the resurrection death is destroyed, the great physical enemy of man is overcome; death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15: 26, 54). From this time forward man is himself once more in all the fulness of his essential being.

STEARNS: *Present Day Theology*, 520, 521.

NOTE 12. Paul scarcely thought of the soul of the believer in this fellowship with Christ as in Hades, which, according to Rom. 10: 7, is thought to be in the abyss (comp. Phil. 2: 10), since the exalted Christ is verily in heaven; but rather as in Paradise (2 Cor. 12: 4); and this is by no means to be sought (as Luke 23: 43) in Hades, but beyond the third heavens (2 Cor. 12: 2), therefore in the special dwelling-place of God. This fellowship with Christ is by no means, as Pfleiderer (1: 263), supposes, the being "glorified with him," Rom. 8: 17, since "a glorified body" belongs to the latter. That Paul supposes the clothing with such a body to come immediately after death (which would only furnish a contradiction accepted by him to the doctrine of the resurrection, unless recourse were to be had to the idea of an intermediate body, an idea which he rightly rejects), follows neither from 2 Cor. 12: 1 where the existence of a resurrection body in heaven is but the expression for the possession ideally present by hope, nor from 2 Cor. 12: 3, where, according to the correct reading and the connection, only the supposition can be expressed, that he will be found clothed and not naked (*i.e.*, yet alive) at the Parousia. But even if one were to accept Pfleiderer's interpretation, which is supported by an untenable reading, then the whole interpretation would proceed on the supposition that those who survive till the Parousia will not be unclothed (*i.e.*, dead), but clothed upon, it cannot therefore admit the idea of a consummation commencing immediately at death, for that would contradict the hope of a Parousia. It may be incomprehensible to modern views how the consummation should not begin immediately after deliverance from the fleshly body; to Paul, however, to whom the consummation of salvation is an act of divine grace which can be brought about only by the return of Christ, it cannot commence at death.

WEISS: *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, II, 57.

CHAPTER XVI

NOTE 1. The blessings of God's kingdom Jesus did not regard as consisting in any special prosperity and glory of an external, earthly kind, such as, on the ground of Old Testament prophecy, the great majority of the Jews expected as the benefit to be realized in the Messianic latter-day; but primarily in the future, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal life which God has prepared for his own in his kingdom. Yet the benefit of the kingdom of God is not merely a future one, which only begins in the life to come. But the heavenly Father permits his children already in the present life to share only in that, and in all that which tends to insure their true and heavenly well-being. Neither can earthly ills and distresses do them real harm and disturb their inward rest and contentment; nor if they but trust in and pray to God, will this world's good things and the powers of the spiritual life be denied them, in so far as these are means of their proving their fidelity to the will of God upon earth. In this sense Jesus recognizes a blessedness granted by God to his children even on earth—a blessedness which we can by no means understand if we do not firmly grasp the connection which this earthly life is meant to have with the future, everlasting, heavenly life. But they whose names are written in heaven recognize it as a truly blessed life, and have joyful experience of it.

WENDT: *The Teaching of Jesus*, I, 240.

NOTE 2. What were the essential elements of this life is clear from this, that he had again and again pointed back to this, how he had beheld God in his original existence with the Father, and he traced his peculiar knowledge of God back to this beholding him. But even in his earthly life all the blessedness of the eternal life seemed already realized. A life in uninterrupted fellowship with his Father, whose highest satisfaction was the fulfilling of his will (John 4: 34) a life full of peace (14: 27) and joy (15: 11) such as the world cannot give nor take away; a life which is ended by a going home to the Father, as it began with a coming down from heaven—that was eternal, blessed life even here. And what formed the deepest essence of this life could be but the one thing which he always testified he had had before all others—his matchless, intuitive, perfect knowledge of God.

WEISS: *Biblical Theology*, II, 349.

NOTE 3. What then is eternal life? It is the fulfilment of man's true destiny in fellowship with God as revealed in Jesus Christ; it is life after the divine pattern—Christlike life. It is the correspondence of man to his true idea, the realization of that sort of character of which Christ is the type. . . . The idea covered by the phrase "eternal life" is declared to be spiritual fellowship with Christ. The term is qualitative rather than quantitative; it emphasizes the source and nature of the life which it describes rather than its continuance. . . . Since it is not the perpetuity of God's existence but his moral perfection which chiefly constitutes his glory, it would follow that the dignity of the life which springs from union with him is found, not primarily in its continuance but in its God-like quality.

STEVENS: *The Johannine Theology*, 320 sq.

NOTE 4. A life lived in fellowship with God is not lived in vain. He who lives it discovers his affinity with God, knows that he may cease to walk with men, but not to be with and for his Father. To be and to feel loved of the Eternal is to be assured that his eternity will be ours; to believe that we are sources of joy to him is to know that we shall rejoice in him forever. Our immortal hope does not then build on the instincts and anticipations of the human soul; it springs, victorious and confident, from our faith in him who so loves us that he will not lose us from his love, for to lose us were to empty his bosom of its joy, his heaven of its beatitude.

FAIRBAIRN: *The City of God*, 211, 212.

NOTE 5. "Eternal life" is that which Paul speaks of as the life which is life indeed. It is not an endless duration of being in time, but being of which time is not a measure. We have, indeed, no powers to grasp the idea except through forms and images of sense. . . . If now we endeavor to bring together the different traits of "the eternal life" we see that it is a life which with all its fulness and all its potencies is *now*; a life which extends beyond the limits of the individual, and preserves, completes, crowns individuality by placing the part in connection with the whole; a life which satisfies while it quickens aspiration; a life which is seen, while we regard it patiently, to be capable of conquering, reconciling, uniting the rebellious, discordant, broken elements of being on which we look and which we bear about with us; a life which gives unity to the constituent parts, which brings together heaven and earth, which offers the sum of existence in one thought.

As we reach forth to grasp it the revelation of God is seen to have been unfolded in its parts in creation; and the parts are seen to have been brought together again by the Incarnation.

WESTCOTT: *The Epistles of John*, 215, 217.

NOTE 6. We discover primarily at the foundation of this conception of eternal life (in the theology of John) the idea of a real existence, an existence such as is peculiar to God and to the Word, that is to say, imperishable, not subject to the derangements and imperfections of the finite mind. It is a doctrine which goes far beyond all that philosophy or the common theology has formulated, and which rests upon conceptions and premises utterly different. In fact it has need neither of the philosophical thesis of immortality and of the indestructibility of the human soul, nor of the theological thesis of a miraculous, corporeal resuscitation of our personality, theses of which the first is absolutely foreign to Biblical religion, and the second absolutely contrary to reason.

In the second place the notion of life, such as is presented in this system, implies the idea of power, of action, of communication, since this life is no longer shut up, or, so to speak, latent or passive in God and in the Word, from whom it comes to the believer. It is not a neutral, dormant affair; it is not a plant without fruit; it is a germ which must develop in the most joyful form. It reveals itself in labors and results of apostolic and Christian activity, which appear as so many flowers and fruits of the union of the disciples with the Saviour.

Finally, we know already, by the conceptions that we get from Mosaism, that the idea of life includes that of satisfaction and of felicity. Satisfaction and felicity are the direct effect of union with Christ. The terms which designate this and which are at the same time synonymous with that of having life, are used equally for the condition of happiness. Thus the phrase "You shall see me," which must necessarily be taken in a spiritual sense, is intimately associated with, and employed ultimately for the other, "You shall rejoice." This Christian joy, by virtue of the fact that it springs directly from an unalterable union, is in its turn indestructible. It is true it is to be won by hard trials, by a combat full of pain, by an apprenticeship full of griefs and privations; but the joy which is to follow all that is by so much the more pure and complete; sorrow disappears when the probationary stage is passed. The happiness of the believer is the peace of the heart, that imperturbable tranquillity which is sure of possessing the true good, and does not desire the pleasures of the

world which do not give contentment. This peace, the Master, in going to rejoin his Father, left to his disciples as a last farewell.

REUSS: *La Théologie Chrétienne*, II, 553-555.

NOTE 7. All spirits are akin; we are human not by virtue of our bodies, but by virtue of our souls, and man stands related to man through all time and over all the world as brother to brother, because all have been made in the same image and bear the same nature. And the city of God but means that the ideal of each man and of all his relationships is being realized. Variety is not thus destroyed but rather created. In this city there will be father and mother, sister and brother spirits, spirits married in the wedlock of mutual affinities, and spirits whose paths shall lie as far apart as the poles of God's intellectual universe. But variety only deepens joy and enlarges duty. Uniformity is the death of happiness. Men must differ if they are to rejoice in each other, to serve and be served. If the life of John was love, heaven must be to him an enlarged home of the heart. That were no heaven to Paul where he was forbidden to speculate, to reason, and to teach. Abraham, as he gathers his children into his bosom, must have in a growing degree the father's joy. Every spirit that enters the city must be, to the ancient citizens, the spirits of just men made perfect, a new object of love, a new call to new duty, a new source of pleasure.

FAIRBAIRN: *The City of God*, 367, 368.

NOTE 8. And thus, Glaucon, the tale has been saved and has not perished, and may be our salvation if we are obedient to the word spoken; and we shall pass safely over the river of Forgetfulness, and our soul will not be defiled. Wherefore my counsel is, that we hold fast to the heavenly way, and follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil. Thus shall we live dear to one another and to the gods, both while remaining here and when, like conquerors in the games, who go round to gather gifts, we receive our reward, and it shall be well with us both in this life and in the pilgrimage of a thousand years which we have been reciting.

PLATO: *Republic*, Bk. x, II, 621. (Jowett's Translation.)

NOTE 9. In that day it shall no more be said, as in scorn,

This or that was never held so till this present age, when men have better learnt that the times and seasons pass along under thy feet to go and come at Thy bidding: and as Thou didst dignify our fathers' days with many revelations above all the foregoing ages since thou tookest the flesh, so thou canst vouchsafe to us, though unworthy, as large a portion of thy Spirit as thou pleasest, for who shall prejudice thy all-governing will? seeing the power of thy grace is not passed away with the primitive times, as fond and faithless men imagine, but thy kingdom is now at hand, and thou standing at the door. Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty; take up that unlimited sceptre which thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.

MILTON: *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence*,
Sec. iv.

CHAPTER XVII

NOTE 1. It is not possible to love and hope for that which one does not believe.

F. DURAMIN: *Medical Philosophy*, 101.

NOTE 2. There is one kind of faith that revels in words; there is another that can hardly find utterance. The former is like riches that come to us by inheritance; the latter is like the daily bread which each of us has to win by the sweat of his brow. The former we cannot expect from new converts; we ought not to expect it or exact it, for fear it might lead to hypocrisy and superstition. . . . We want less of creeds but more of trust, less of ceremony but more of work, less of solemnity but more of genial honesty, less of doctrine but more of love. There is a faith as small as a grain of mustard seed, but that grain alone can move mountains, and, more than that, it can move hearts.

MAX MUELLER: *Lecture in Westminster Abbey*, Dec. 3, 1873.

NOTE 3. The Apostles' Creed is no piece of mosaic but an organic unit, an instinctive work of art in the same sense as

the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Te Deum* and the classical prayers and hymns of the Church.

SCHAFF: *The Creeds of Christendom*, I, 23.

NOTE 4. In this is conveyed the lesson which it is well to lay to heart, that the religious consciousness of the churches has no sympathy whatever with the domineering arrogance of any heresy which seeks to proclaim its own frigid intellectuality as the one valid canon and the infallible authority in matters of faith. This will be repeated in every period when a doctrinaire pedantry tries, with the ridiculous claim of possessing the only true system of doctrine, to force itself upon the churches. And we must add that it is precisely true theological science which, perceiving the irreconcilability of any such claim with the proper nature of theology, must most thoroughly justify the protest and the practical consciousness of the churches.

PFLEIDERER: *Development of Theology*, 93.

NOTE 5. The inclination to formulate the content of religion in *Articles of Faith* is as natural to Christianity as the effort to *verify* these articles with reference to science and to history. On the other hand, the universal and supernatural character of the Christian religion imposes upon its adherents the duty of finding a statement of it which will not be impaired by our wavering knowledge of nature and history; and, indeed, which will be able to maintain itself before every possible theory of nature or of history. The problem which thus arises permits, indeed, of no absolute solution, since all knowledge is relative; and yet religion essays to bring her absolute truth into the sphere of relative knowledge and to reduce it to statement there. But history teaches, and every thinking Christian testifies, that the problem does not come to its solution. On that account the progressive efforts which have been made to solve it are of value.

HARNACK: *History of Dogma*, I, 2.

NOTE 6. I am content to say that neither my intellectual preference, nor my moral admiration goes heartily with the Unitarian heroes, sects or productions of any age. Ebionites, Arians, Socinians, all seem to contrast unfavorably with their opponents, and to exhibit a type of thought and character far less worthy, on the whole, of the true genius of Christianity. I am conscious that my deepest obligations, as a learner from

others, are in almost every department to writers not of my own creed. In philosophy I have had to unlearn most of what I had imbibed from my early text-books, and the authors in chief favor with them. In Biblical interpretation, I derive from Calvin and Whitby the help that fails me in Crell and Belsham. In devotional literature and religious thought, I find nothing of ours that does not pale before Augustine, Taylor and Pascal. And in the poetry of the Church it is the Latin and German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley, or of Keble, that fasten on my memory and heart, and make all else seem poor and cold.

Dr. JAMES MARTINEAU. Quoted in Scott's *The Ante-Nicene Theology*, 379.

NOTE 7. Now if none of the principles in the combination of which the strength of Christian civilization is to be found had any influence in heathen civilization, but are all characteristic of the Christian; if when the corresponding dogmas were unknown they were unknown, and wherever the dogmas have been preached they have become influential; if all the world over, wherever the gospel has been proclaimed and under every diversity of race and climate, the same teaching has been followed by the same effects, one conclusion only can follow. The differences distinguishing Christian from heathen civilization must be due to the difference of its principles, and these principles are the dogmas of the Christian faith. The conclusion is confirmed by the further fact that the activity of the influence is directly proportioned to the activity of the dogmatic belief. That the character of our civilization has spread beyond the circle of believers in dogma, and leavens more or less the entire community, is most true. It would be strange indeed if it were otherwise. But that among the believers of the dogmatic faith the distinctive principles of Christian civilization exist with the greatest intensity, admits of an easy proof.

GARBETT: *The Dogmatic Faith*, 184.

NOTE 8. Among these are the view that the Church is not identical with any form of ecclesiastical organization; the little stress laid upon priestly mediation and sacramental grace, that baptism is not essential to salvation, the freedom of the will in religious choice, the love of God in Christ rather than the sight of the law showing men their sins, that redemption is the imparting of the new life of Christ rather than paying a debt to the devil or to justice, that the appear-

ance of Christ is the great supernatural revelation of God carrying his miracles with it rather than making them proof of his revelation, and, above all, that the incarnate and glorified Christ is the sum and center of all doctrine and life. These ideas, he says, so much heard of in modern times, were all familiar elements in the Nicene theology.

See ALLEN: *Continuity of Christian Thought*, 17 ff.

NOTE 9. Nothing can, I conceive, be more superficial or erroneous than the reasonings of those who maintain that the moral element of Christianity has in it nothing distinctive or peculiar. The method of this school, of which Bolingbroke may be regarded as the type, is to collect from the writings of different heathen writers certain isolated passages embodying precepts that are inculcated by Christianity; and when the collection has become large the task was supposed to be accomplished. But the true originality of a system of modern teaching depends not so much upon the elements of which it is composed, as upon the manner in which they are fused into a symmetrical whole; upon the proportional value which is attached to different qualities, or, to state the thing in a single word, upon the type of character that is formed. Now it is quite certain that the Christian type differs not only in degree but in kind from the Pagan type.

LECKY: *History of Rationalism*, I, 335.

NOTE 10. The life which comes from God, so soon as it is in the hands of men, hastens to frame itself as dogma, to mold itself into formulas, we had almost said to commit suicide; and the efforts, whether of the heart or of science, to reanimate it and to restore it to itself, instead of being recognized as the sincere homage rendered to the truth, are only too often looked upon as heresy. The authority of forms is of all authority the most suspicious. In the face of prejudice and antipathy, the conscientious historian must find his compensation in his work itself. A subject like that dealt with here is constantly in touch with ideas the most sublime, the most fruitful, the most capable of nourishing the spirit of man, and of elevating him above the petty quarrels of the world and of the schools. The pains he devotes to it are for him an inexhaustible source of moral and intellectual pleasures. They familiarize him with models which must continually nourish his strength, and if he is grieved at seeing how often in all ages men are divided precisely over that

which ought to have united them, it is, certainly, neither indifference nor the spirit of party which will console him, but only assiduous search after the truth, which never hides itself from those who do not hold that they exclusively possess it.

REUSS: *Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne*, II, 608.

NOTE 11. The final reason for holding that for our recognition of the teaching of Jesus the previous settlement of all critical questions is comparatively a matter of indifference, lies in the magnificent inner unity of the teaching of Jesus. If the preaching of Jesus consisted of a sum of particular truths, it would indeed be of the greatest importance to fix precisely as to its details the contents of the teaching, so far as Jesus has given it. But since the preaching of Jesus is an organic unity in regard to religious views whose governing principle is involved in the idea of God, and whose characteristic exposition and application have been recorded in harmony in all the sources, therefore it is comparatively a matter of indifference for our understanding of the whole of the teaching of Jesus, whether or not we can determine the authenticity of this or that detail and application of the collective view.

WENDT: *The Teaching of Jesus*, II, 413.

NOTE 12. A great creed is not unlike a great cathedral, only far more permanently vital. Yet every cathedral is for use and reverence, not for forgetfulness and scorn.

In some transfiguring hour of your life you have perhaps found yourself in York Minster or under the great nave at Chartres, or beneath the spires of Cologne, at vespers, it may be, an hour before sunset, when "the lights like glories fall." Of course, you were not there to fling cheap cavil upon the old centuries that built the pile. On the contrary, you were *one* with the old ages. The shafts of the hoary columns, the vast arch of the nave, the blaze yonder of the great rose window, and, high in the misty dome, that ray of light as from the quiver of the cherubim; these were not symbols and synonyms of mediæval superstition. No, no. Life beat here, you say, life built these walls, the life of faith and love, the vision of realms ineffable; these reared this pile and are eloquent through it forever.

But so, and far more so, of the great Creed. Love built it. Faith built it. Christ is in it. I love it. It shall not enslave me, for the same Christ may speak to me also, but neither will I be disloyal to it. Back of the verbiage, the "time ves-

ture," as Goethe called it, is a soul of immortal verity. I must assert, not merely historic venerableness, not merely antique beauty, but also a certain perennial truth and continuing authority in the common doctrine of the Church universal. I cling to this more sinewy and, as it seems to me, more spiritual estimate of the great, wrestling past, in which also Christ dwelt, as truly as he dwells with us to-day. This is no bigotry. It is simply the Pauline logic of a redoubled and reverberating Incarnation applied in the intellectual field.

A. J. LYMAN: *The Truth of the Incarnation*, 9.

NOTE 13. The Creed is of no one age. As often as we repeat it we are guarded from forgetting the articles which our circumstances do not force upon our notice. All the facts remain, and when a crisis comes, that will be ready to our hand which our fathers have delivered to us. We want nothing new, but the old rekindled by a fuller light.

WESTCOTT: *The Historic Faith*, 22.

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